

SINTRAM AND  
HIS COMPANIONS

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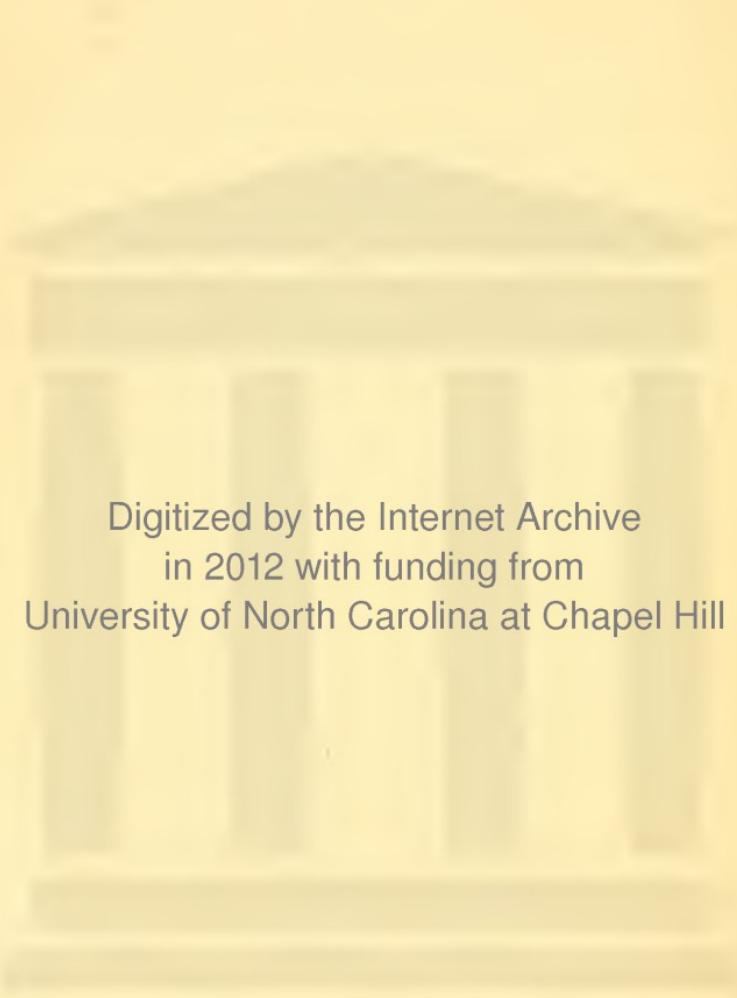
Sintram & his companions

To W. Moor  
from J. Beck

Ames 1912

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# **SINTRAM & HIS COMPANIONS**







*The Knight, Death, and the Devil*

by Albrecht Dürer

1513

1917

p. 264

# SINTRAM & HIS COMPANIONS.

BY LAMOTTE FOUQUÉ

TRANSLATED BY  
A. C. FARQUHARSON  
WITH A FRONTISPICE  
FROM AN ENGRAVING BY  
ALBRECHT DÜRER

& TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY EDMUND J. SULLIVAN

METHUEN & CO:  
36 ESSEX STREET  
LONDON W.C.

*This translation was first published in 1908*



## PREFACE

THE question may have arisen from time to time as to whether a poet has drawn his imaginative creations from earlier works, or whether they have sprung from some other source of inspiration. The point is by no means without interest, as it seems to me, and I think that when an author is able to speak clearly about it, he is wise, he is even in a certain sense bound to share this knowledge with his readers. Hence the following account.

A few years ago I found a fine copperplate engraving by Albrecht Dürer among my birthday gifts. A knight in armour, with an old, worn face, riding a great horse and followed by his dog, is passing through a dreadful valley, where the clefts of rock and the tree roots distort themselves into hideous forms. The ground is thickly carpeted with poisonous toadstools, and evil serpents crawl in and out among them. Close beside the knight, on a small, lean horse, rides Death; behind, a demonlike shape claws after him

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with its long arm. Horse and dog look strange and unnatural, as though transformed by the ghastly surroundings, but the knight rides calmly onwards, carrying on his lance-point a transfixed salamander. In the far distance a fortress can be seen, its fair hospitable ramparts looking downwards into the valley, whose contrasting desolation seems to sink all the more deeply into the soul.\*

My friend, Eduard Hitsig, the giver of this picture, sent a letter with it asking me to write a romance for him in interpretation of these enigmatical figures. I was unable to do this at the time, and for long afterwards, but I carried the remembrance of the picture about with me continually, in peace and war, until now it has disentangled itself and taken the shape, not of a romance, but of a little novel, if my kind readers will allow its right to the name.

FOUQUÉ.

*Written on December 5, 1814.*

\* D. E. Schoeber in *Dürer's Leben*, etc. (Leipzig and Schleiz, 1769, p. 87) says of this unique work: "Dürer must have taken the idea from some special event, or else he meant it to express figuratively a soldier's career." A. Bartsch in *Le peintre Graveur* (Vol. 7, p. 107, Vienne, 1808) suggests that the knight in the engraving is Franz von Sickingen. When Bartsch wrote, the original oil-painting was for sale at Jacoby's Art Gallery in Berlin.

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The Knight, Death and the Devil, from an  
engraving by Albrecht Dürer, 1513 *Frontispiece*

From drawings by Edmund J. Sullivan

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A BOY RUSHED INTO THE HALL

# SINTRAM

AND HIS COMPANIONS

## CHAPTER THE FIRST

**I**N the lofty citadel of Drontheim sat an assembly of the knights of Norway, holding council together upon the good of the State. The council was over, but they still sat on, round the giant table of stone, in the midst of the vaulted echoing hall, feasting and making merry late into the night.

The rising storm dashed a wild cloud of snow against the shaken windows. The doors quivered in their oaken frames, and the heavy locks rattled violently. The castle clock, after a slow ominous jarring of its many wheels, struck the hour; one.

The sound had scarcely died away when, uttering a terrified shriek, a boy rushed into the hall, white as death, with streaming hair and eyes fast closed. He took shelter behind the carven seat of the great knight Biörn, and, stretching out wild hands in supplication to the splendid company, cried in a piercing voice:

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"My father! My father! Noble knights!  
Death and that other one are following hard  
upon me!"

An awful silence had fallen cold upon the assembly, broken only by the reiterated cries of the terror-stricken child. Then an old follower of Biörn's, one of his great retinue, Rolf the Good by name, came to the weeping child, lifted him in his arms and prayed aloud in a voice that was half a song:

Help, Father mine,  
This child of Thine.  
I trust, and cannot trust.

And immediately the boy, as though in a dream, loosened his hold upon his father, and suffered Rolf to carry him, as if he had been a feather, out of the hall, still weeping and murmuring as he went.

The knights and lords gazed on each other in amazement.

Then the mighty Biörn broke the silence with wild words, laughing grimly the while: "Vex not yourselves about this strange matter. The boy is my only son. From his fifth year onwards has he been thus, and now he is twelve. It made me uneasy at first but now I am accustomed to it, for once every year it comes upon him, and always at this

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season. Your pardon for so many words about my poor silly Sintram, and let us take ourselves to wiser themes."

But still the silence continued. Single voices, in low uncertain tones, tried to renew their interrupted speech of a while since, but there was no response. A couple of the youngest and lightest of heart began a catch, but the storm took part with such a strange singing and sighing and moaning that this, too, soon broke off and ceased.

And now there was neither sound nor movement in the great hall. The torchlight flickered drearily among the shadows of the vaulted roof. This heroic feast might have been a pale assembly of lifeless images attired in giant suits of mail.

At last one rose among them, the chaplain of the castle, sole priest in this circle of knights. He spoke, addressing Biörn:

"Dear lord and master, does it not seem that God Himself has directed our hearts and eyes, as by a miracle, upon you and upon your son? See, we can think of nothing else, so had you not best tell us plainly all you know of the boy's strange doings? It may be that the solemn tale, for such it surely is, will be profitable for us in the midst of this wild mirth."

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Biörn looked at the speaker with no pleased countenance.

"Sir chaplain," he said, "it may be that *your* part in the tale will prove to be more than either you or I care about. Let us not spoil our merry northern meeting with sad words."

But the chaplain, with a gesture at once mild and firm, moved a step nearer to the knight and said:

"My lord, the choice *was* yours, to speak or to be silent. But now that you have spoken, and have so strangely hinted at my share in your son's misfortune, I imperatively demand that you reveal the whole matter, word for word, even as it happened. This, for my honour's sake, you cannot refuse."

Biörn bent his proud head in grave concession and spoke:

"Seven years ago I and my followers were keeping the Christmas festival together. Now there are certain old and honourable customs which we inherit from our mighty forefathers. And this is one: that the great golden image of a boar be set in the midst of the table, whereby men might swear many a jovial and propitious oath. Sir chaplain here, who used often to be my guest at that time, was no great friend to these relics from the old hero

world. He and his kind were not in such very high favour in those old days."

The chaplain interposed:

"*My* noble forefathers," he said, "reckoned with God rather than with the world, and with God their favour was good enough. That was how they came to convert your ancestors, and if I can help you in like manner, your scorn shall not trouble my heart."

The knight's brow darkened, but there was a certain fear in his wrath as he continued his speech.

"Yes, yes," he said, "uncertain promises and threats about an unseen world, that they may get what they can out of us in this. Ah! in those days I was rich indeed. Sometimes it comes over me that all this happened many hundreds of years ago, and that I am left alone upon the earth, so terrible is the change in all things about me; but then I remember that the greater part of this goodly company were wont to seek me in the days of my happiness, and knew Verena, my fair and heavenly wife—"

He broke off, covering his face with his hands, and it seemed that he wept. The storm had ceased. The soft moonlight pierced the window-panes, touching Biörn's wild features with its calm caress.

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Then, suddenly, he sprang up, making all the armour clash, and called aloud in a voice of thunder:

“Am I becoming a monk, as she became a nun? No, my cunning sir priest, your webs are too fine for flies of my build.”

“I know naught of webs,” answered the priest. “Openly and honourably for six years have I set before you the choice between hell and heaven; as for the step which the holy Verena took, to that you gave your consent. But I know not what this has to do with your son’s trouble, and I await your telling.”

“And long you may wait,” laughed Biörn grimly, “sooner shall—”

“Blaspheme not,” the chaplain sternly interposed, and his eyes flashed.

“Hola!” shouted Biörn, wild with horror, “Hola! Death and his fellows are loose.”

And in a frenzy of fear he fled from the hall and down the steps into the courtyard. There the harsh blast of his horn could be heard blowing up his followers, and presently the ring of many feet died away over the icy pavement.

One by one, in great and silent fear, the guests departed, until none but the chaplain was left, sitting at the great stone table in solitary prayer.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND

A LITTLE later Rolf came back, and, entering the hall with soft slow steps, stood amazed to find it so empty and deserted. He had been far away, quieting the child in a remote part of the castle, and had heard nothing of his master's wild outbreak. The chaplain told him, gently, of what had happened, and then said:

"But my good Rolf, there is one thing I should like you to tell me: what strange words were those wherewith you pacified Sintram's sickness a while ago? They had a sweet and holy sound, and yet I hardly understand them:

‘I trust, and cannot trust.’"

"Reverend father," answered Rolf, "from a child I can remember that of all the fair Gospel stories none took so powerful a hold upon me as that one concerning the boy who was possessed, whom the disciples were not able to heal, and for whom at last our transfigured Saviour came down Himself from the mountain to rend the bonds wherewith the terrified child was chained fast to the

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power of the Evil One. I always felt as if I had known that child and had nursed him and played with him in his hours of ease. And as I grew older, the father's distress over his son's sickness lay heavy on my heart. Surely all this was a prophecy concerning Sintram, our poor young lord, whom I love even as if he were my own child, and at times the words of the weeping father in the Gospel rise from my heart to my lips: 'Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief.' Something like this I may have sung and prayed to-night in my great anguish. Ah, dear and reverend father, sometimes my mind is sore darkened within me when I consider how heavily a father's grim word may cling to his luckless child. But God be praised, my faith and hope are still strong."

"Rolf, my good old friend," said the priest, "I only half understand all that you say about poor Sintram, for I know not when nor how this evil came upon him. I would fain hear how it happened, unless you be bound to silence by oath or solemn vow."

"With all my heart," answered Rolf. "I have long desired to tell you, only you seemed to be estranged from us of late. But now I dare not longer leave my young master sleeping alone, and early to-morrow we depart with

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my lord. Will you come with me, dear sir, to Sintram's bedside?"

Whereupon the chaplain rose, and taking Rolf's little lamp in his hand, walked beside him through the long vaulted passages.

Far away, in a little room, they found the sleeping child. Upon his face, always so pale, the lamplight threw a strange and dazzling lustre. The chaplain stood a long time watching him, lost in thought. At last he said:

"I remember that even from his birth his features were somewhat hard and sharply cut. But now, for a child, his looks are terrible. Yet, seeing him as he sleeps, one cannot but love him, try as one may."

"True, true, dear and reverend father," answered Rolf, and it was plain how his whole soul responded to the least word spoken in praise of his beloved young master. He placed the light so that it should not dazzle the sleeper, arranged a comfortable chair for the priest, and seating himself opposite, began his story.

"It was that very Christmas feast of which my lord was telling you, and between him and his followers talk had arisen about the German merchants and of how they could best curb the ever-growing pride of the seaport towns. Then Biörn, my master, stretched

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out his hand to that evil image of the golden boar, and vowed that he would slay without mercy whatever German trader fate should suffer to fall into his power.

“The fair Verena turned pale and would have interposed, but it was too late. The bloody word was spoken. And at that very moment, as though hell’s monarch would fain bind fast his vassals by more than one bond, there came a warder into the hall, with the tidings that two citizens from a German trading town, an old man and his son, had been cast ashore here, and were now waiting without to claim the protection of the lord of the castle.

“A great horror fell upon the knight. But he believed himself bound by his rash vow and by the accursed heathen symbol. The command was given to arm ourselves with sharp-pointed steel lances, and to assemble in the castle court. There, at his sign, we were to dispatch the unfortunate suppliants.

“It was the first and I hope the last time in my life that I said ‘No’ to my master’s command, and I said it loudly and without flinching. The good God, knowing whom He would have in His Heaven and whom not, armed me with constancy and strength.

“And I think my lord guessed and respected

## SINTRAM & HIS COMPANIONS 11

the reason of his old servant's disobedience. He spoke, half wrathful and half in scorn:

"‘Go up into my wife’s chamber. Her women are distracted with fear, and she may need help. Go up, Rolf the Good, and make one woman the more!’"

"I thought: ‘Scoff and scorn as you like.’ And I went as he said without a word.

"Now as I was going upstairs there met me two strange figures, and terrible as strange. They were not known to me, nor could I guess how they had found entrance into the castle. The one was of a great stature, deadly pale, and unimaginably thin. The other was a little man of hideous form and feature. Now as I controlled my fear and looked earnestly at them, it certainly seemed to me—”

His speech was interrupted by a slight sound of moaning and shuddering from the bed. Rolf and the chaplain hastened thither, and they saw how a deadly fear had fallen upon the sleeper’s face, and how he strove hard to open his eyes and could not. The priest made the sign of the cross over him, and the strange fit subsided by degrees. He slept again, peacefully, and the two went quietly back to their seats.

"You see," said Rolf, "it does not do to

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image this terror too closely. Enough that they went down into the castle court, I up into my lady's rooms. The fragile Verena was half fainting from fear, and I hastened to her relief, using what knowledge I have (by the good God's gift) in the healing efficacy contained in air and herb and stone. But she had hardly recovered, when she commanded me, with that calm and holy fortitude you know so well, to go down with her into the court. She would turn aside the horror of the night, or perish with it. We had to pass by Sintram's bedside. Dear God, how the hot tears fell from my eyes to see his peaceful breathing, and how he smiled as he slept." The old man covered his eyes with his hands and wept bitterly. Mastering himself, he continued:

"We were close to the windows of the lower staircase, when we distinctly heard the voice of the elder merchant, and looking out I saw his fine face, illumined by the torchlight, and beside him his bright-haired son. 'I call God the Lord to witness,' he cried aloud, 'that I meant no harm to this house. Surely this is heathendom into which we are fallen, and not the castle of a Christian knight. If so, then strike. And thou, beloved son, face death with constancy and courage. In

Heaven we shall know why it was so ordained.'

"Then I thought I saw those two dread shapes in the midst of the crowd of Biörn's followers. He who was so pale had a great sickle-shaped sword in his hand. The smaller carried a curiously notched spear.

"But Verena threw open the window, and called aloud, her flute-like voice piercing the wild night.

"'Beloved lord and husband, for the sake of your only son have mercy upon these good men. Save them from death and withstand the assaults of the Evil One.'

"What Biörn answered in his frenzy let me not repeat. He pledged his child's soul in ghastly wager, calling upon Death and the Devil if he failed from his vow. Hush! the boy stirs again. Let me make an end of the dark tale quickly.

"The knight commanded his followers to strike, and his eyes blazed so fiercely that even now he is still sometimes called 'Biörn of the Flaming Eyes.' Then we saw those two terrible strangers bestirring themselves in the press, but Verena cried in a voice of terror, 'Lord, my Saviour, help!' and the two awful figures were gone, and the knight and his followers, as though blinded and be-

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wildered, turned upon each other, but without hurt. Neither could they touch or harm their victims, but fought wildly, beating the air. These bowed in reverence to Verena, and with a silent prayer, turned to depart. The castle gates, shaken asunder by a whirlwind of snow, fell open, leaving the road into the mountain free.

“My lady and I were still standing doubtful upon the stairs, when I thought I saw the two dread figures glide past me softly, stealthily, as a breath, and Verena cried: ‘In God’s name, Rolf, did you see them, the tall pale man and the ugly little fellow, slipping past us up the stair?’ I rushed after, and alas, found Sintram even as you have seen him to-night.

“From that day a great change fell upon my young master, and each year at this season the dream-sickness returns. The lady of the castle, reading in this event Heaven’s clear warning and retribution, and seeing that my lord, in place of repentance, became day by day ever wilder and more fiery of heart, resolved to retire into a cloister, there to spend her life in solitude and in prayer, prayer for salvation in this world and eternal happiness hereafter for herself and her poor child.”

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Rolf was silent, and after some thought the chaplain spoke:

"I understand now," he said, "how it is that for the past six years Biörn has preferred to confess his sins in the general without going too closely into their nature. And I understand, too, his acquiescence in Verena's desire for the cloister. Yet I think there must have been a remnant of shame alive in his heart, and perhaps it is there still. At any rate that sweet flower of heaven, his wife, could not dwell longer in the power of this hurricane. Yet now who is left to save and shelter poor Sintram?"

"He has his mother's prayers," Rolf answered. "Look, reverend father, when day is breaking, even as now, and the morning wind breathes through the sunlit window, I seem to see the sweet eyes of the lady of the castle, and to hear her gentle voice. After God, the holy Verena is our help."

"And we, too, will send up our humble cry to God," the chaplain said, and he knelt with Rolf by Sintram's bedside in silent and fervent prayer. The first light of morning transfigured the boy's pale face, and he began to smile in his dreams.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE room was full of sunshine when Sintram sprang up, as though the light hurt him. He looked at the chaplain with no friendly eye.

"So there is a *priest* here in the castle," he said, "and yet the wicked dream dared to trouble me. A fine priest!"

"My child," the chaplain answered, very gently, "I have been praying for you with all my heart, and now and always I will pray for you, but only God is all-mighty."

"You speak very freely to the son of Biörn," cried Sintram. "'My child!' and 'you will pray!' If it were not that the frightful dream came to me again last night you would make me laugh."

"My young Lord Sintram," said the chaplain, "I am not surprised that you do not know me again, for indeed you yourself are changed beyond recognition."

His eyes grew dim as he said it, but Rolf looked sadly in the boy's face, and said:

"Ah, my dear young master, why do you always pretend to be so much worse than

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you really are? And you used to have such a good memory; can you have forgotten our good, kind chaplain, who used to come to the castle so often, and bring you pretty songs and bright images of the holy saints?"

"Yes, I remember," said Sintram, thoughtfully. "Then my blessed mother was alive."

"Our gracious lady still lives, God be praised," said Rolf, smiling.

But Sintram shook his head.

"Not for us, not for us poor sick folk," he said. "But why will you not call her blessed? Surely she knows nothing of my dreams?"

"Yes, she knows," answered the chaplain.

"She knows, and calls upon God to help you. But be on your guard with your wild haughty spirit. It might come to pass, alas, it might some day easily come to pass, that she would know of you and your dreams no longer. And this would happen if soul and body were parted, and from that day the holy angels would know you no more for ever."

Sintram fell back upon his couch as though thunderstruck, and Rolf said, with a troubled sigh:

"Reverend father, you should not speak so sternly to the poor, sick child."

But Sintram raised himself, leaned lovingly

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on the chaplain, and said with streaming eyes:

“Leave him alone, my good, kind-hearted Rolf, for he knows what he is about. Would you do well to chide him if he saw me slipping into an ice chasm and pulled me out sharply and roughly by the hair?”

The priest looked upon the boy, deeply moved, and was about to utter some pious reflections, when Sintram suddenly sprang from the bed and asked for his father. On being told that Biörn had departed, he refused to remain another hour in the castle, and when the chaplain and his old servant expressed their anxiety as to the danger of rapid riding to his scarcely recovered health, he waived it aside, saying:

“Believe me, reverend father, and you, dear old Rolf, if it were not for these dreams I should be the stoutest young squire upon God’s earth, and even as it is I am not much behind the best. Moreover, I am now rid of the dreams for a year to come.”

In obedience to his somewhat imperious sign, Rolf brought the horses without delay. The boy sprang boldly into the saddle, and with an affectionate farewell to the chaplain sped away, swift as an arrow, among the frozen

## SINTRAM & HIS COMPANIONS 19

valleys and snow-covered mountains, Rolf following him closely behind.

They had not ridden far when a singular sound arrested Sintram's notice. It came from a neighbouring ravine in the rocks, a dull, muffled sound, as it might be from the clapper of a small mill; only there came, too, mingled with it, the hollow painful moaning of a human voice. They turned their horses in that direction, and a strange sight met their eyes.

A tall pale man, who seemed to be a pilgrim, strove with all his strength to clamber up out of the deep snow, but always in vain. And as he strove, a great multitude of bones, which he wore loosely fastened to his wide robe, rattled against one another with an unearthly noise; and this was the origin of the mysterious sound.

Rolf crossed himself with a sharp shudder at the sight, but Sintram called boldly:

“ Speak, and tell us what you are doing there all alone.”

The answer was a ghastly grimace, and the words:

“ In death I live.”

“ What bones are those upon your dress?”

“ Relics, relics, my young lord.”

“ Are you a pilgrim then?”

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“Restless, tireless, over all the earth.”

“I will not leave you to perish here in the snow.”

“I have no will to perish.”

“Mount up behind me on my horse.”

“That will I.”

And in an instant, with astonishing strength and agility, he was out of the snow and seated behind Sintram, encircling him with his long arms. The horse, terrified by the shaking of the bones, broke into a frenzied gallop across the trackless valleys. Sintram soon found himself alone with his strange companion, Rolf spurring and panting far in the rear.

Sliding and all but falling down a steep mountain side, the frightened horse at last slackened a little, changing his headlong pace to a wild, unruly trot. But he still chafed and foamed, nor heeded his master's controlling hand. They were in a steep, narrow ravine, and here Sintram and the stranger spoke together as follows:

“Draw your robe more closely round you, you who are so pale, and quiet the bones, that I may quiet my horse.”

“The bones will not be quieted, my child. It is their way.”

“Do not press me so close with your long arms. Your arms are so cold.”



EDWARD J. SULLIVAN - 1903

SINTRAM SOON FOUND HIMSELF ALONE WITH HIS STRANGE COMPANION



## SINTRAM & HIS COMPANIONS 21

"Be content, my child, be content; there is no help for it. And my long cold arms have not yet crushed your heart."

"Do not breathe so upon me with your frozen breath. It draws my strength away."

"Be at rest, my child, be at rest. It cannot be otherwise. But as yet I have not breathed your life away."

The singular conversation came to an end, for Sintram found himself suddenly on an open snow-covered plain, sun-illumined, and saw his father's castle not far off. He was still pondering whether he should invite this unchancy pilgrim home with him, when the pilgrim himself relieved him of all doubt. For he swung himself swiftly from the horse, startling it once more into terror, and said, pointing to the castle with his lifted forefinger:

"I know old Biörn of the Flaming Eyes well; too well it may be. Greet him from me. He needs not ask my name. He will know me from your description."

Thereupon he turned aside from Sintram's path, and entered a thick pine wood. The rattling of the bones could still be heard as he passed from sight under the interlacing boughs.

Slowly and carefully, at a foot-pace, Sintram rode on to his father's castle, for his

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horse was now utterly exhausted. He himself hardly knew what to tell and what to leave untold of his strange ride, and his heart was full of anxiety about Rolf.

So, before he was aware, he found himself at the castle gate. The drawbridge was lowered, the doors opened wide, and a servant ushered his young lord into the hall. There sat Biörn, alone. The great table was covered with flasks and cups, and surrounded by upright suits of mail with visors closed. For it was Biörn's daily pleasure thus to entertain the trophies of his departed ancestors.

Father and son began to speak together as follows:

“Where is Rolf?”

“I do not know, Father. I lost him in the mountain.”

“I will have Rolf shot if he cannot take better care of my only son.”

“Then, Father, you may as well shoot your only son as well, for I cannot live without Rolf. And let spear or arrow threaten him, I will put myself in the sharp weapon's way and shield his true heart with my worthless breast.”

“Well, in that case Rolf need not be shot. But I will banish him from the castle.”

“Then I will go with him, Father, and

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serve him faithfully in forest and mountain."

"Well, then I suppose Rolf must stay here."

"I think so, too, Father."

"Were you quite alone on your ride?"

"No, not alone, but with a strange pilgrim, who said he knew you well, or it might be too well."

And therewith Sintram told his father all he knew of the pale man.

"Yes, I know him well," said Biörn. "He is half crazy and half wise, for so it sometimes is with men. But you, my boy, go to rest after your wild ride. You have my word of honour that Rolf shall be well and kindly received. Nay, he shall be sought for in the mountain if he come not soon."

"I rely upon you, my father," answered Sintram, in tones of mingled pride and humility. And he did according to Biörn's command.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH

IT was towards evening when Sintram awoke. He found Rolf sitting by his bedside, and smiled in his faithful old follower's kindly face with a rare and child-like joy. But soon his brows darkened to a haughty frown, and he asked:

"What reception had you from my father, Rolf? Did he utter an unkind word?"

"Not exactly, dear young master, for to tell you the truth he spoke no word to me at all. At first he eyed me right fiercely, but he restrained himself, and ordered a servant to set wine and meat before me, and then to lead me to you."

"He might have kept his word better," Sintram said. "But he is my father, and one must not be too particular. I will go to supper." He sprang from the bed and threw on his fur mantle. But Rolf interposed.

"Dear my lord," he said, pleadingly, "you will do better to sup here in your own room. Your father has a guest in whose company I would not willingly see you. Stay here, and I will beguile you with sweet stories and songs."

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"Dear Rolf," answered Sintram, "I should like that better than anything in the world. Only it suits me ill to flinch from any man. Tell me, who is this that I shall find with my father?"

"Ah! my lord," said the old man, "it is he whom you met this morning in the mountains. In the old days, when I used to ride with my Lord Biörn, we sometimes came across him, but I was never allowed to tell you anything about him, and to-day is the first time he has ever been to the castle."

"Ah! the mad pilgrim," answered Sintram, and he stood awhile, as though considering something, in deep thought. Then, quickly recovering himself, he said:

"Good old friend, I would far rather stay here this evening quite alone with you and listen to your stories and songs, and all the pilgrims in the world should not lure me out of this quiet room. But there is this to consider. I feel a kind of fear at the thought of that tall pale man, and this a knight's son cannot suffer. Do not be vexed with me, my Rolf, but I feel that I must go and look that mysterious pilgrim straight in the eyes."

And with that he opened the door of the room and went with ringing steps into the hall. Biörn and the pilgrim were seated at oppo-

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site ends of the great table, on which many candles were burning. And it was a strange sight, in the midst of the circle of lifeless armour, how these two living figures, pale and proud, moved and ate and drank.

As the boy entered the pilgrim looked at him, and Biörn spoke:

“Him you know already. He is my only son, and your fellow-traveller of this morning.”

The pilgrim bent a long look upon Sintram and shook his head, saying:

“I was not aware of it.”

On this the boy broke out impatiently:

“Well! I must say you make an unequal division. You thought you knew my father somewhat too well. Me, it seems, you don’t know well enough. Look me in the face. Who took you up with him upon his horse? And whose horse, for thanks, did you make mad with fear? Answer, if you can!”

Biörn shook his head, but he smiled, well-pleased, as he always was, over his son’s wildest sallies. But the pilgrim shrank away in great fear as though he were threatened by some terrible over-mastering power. At last, half crazed, he stammered forth the words:

“Yes, yes, you are right, my dear young lord. You are always right, whatever you may choose to say.”

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Then the lord of the castle broke into a great laugh, crying:

“Oh, pilgrim! Man of marvels! What has come to you now with all your wise sayings and warnings? Has the boy made you dumb and faint with a single word? Beware, prophet, beware!”

But the pilgrim threw such a terrible look at Biörn that those flaming eyes seemed all but extinguished by it. And he spoke in a voice like solemn thunder:

“As to what lies between you and me, old friend, that is another thing. We have no right to reproach each other. Stay a moment, I will sing you a song to the lute.” He reached out his hand to where a forgotten lute hung behind him on the wall. It was half unstrung, but after sounding a few chords with marvellous skill and strength he had tuned it, and sang this song to the deep, melancholy accompaniment of the strings:

I once had a flower long ago;  
But I squandered at play my heart’s delight  
Craven and coward, who once was knight,  
Through the heart’s deep sin and woe.  
Thine was the flower, even so;  
Why didst thou not hold thy heart’s delight,  
Sinner and slave, no longer knight,  
Alone in thy heart’s deep woe!

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"Beware!" he cried again in a piercing voice, and he plucked so fiercely at the strings that they snapped asunder with a complaining cry of pain, and a cloud of dust rose out of the heart of the old lute, shrouding the singer from sight.

Now Sintram had scrutinized the pilgrim sharply during the song, and it came over him that this could not be the same who had been his fellow-traveller in the mountain. His suspicion had almost grown to a certainty that there had been some mistake, when the stranger again looked at him in great fear, hung the lute back in its place, humbly craving pardon and bowing low, and then fled from the hall in a panic of terror, contrasting strangely with his stern and haughty bearing towards Biörn.

And upon Biörn the boy's looks fell. And he saw him sunk back senseless in his chair as though smitten by some stroke. Sintram's cry brought Rolf and the other servants into the hall, and it was only through their united and strenuous efforts that he recovered consciousness. His looks were still wild, and his speech wandering, but he suffered himself to be quietly put to rest.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH

UPON Biörn, till now so strong, a sickness fell after this strange event. He wandered in his speech continually, but declared with a fierce determination that he would recover. He laughed scornfully at his feverfits, that they should dare to attack him, Biörn; and then he would mutter to himself: "That was not the one. That was not the one. There must be another out in the cold mountain."

And every time he heard these words Sintram shuddered in spite of himself. They strengthened his suspicion that he who had ridden with him upon his horse, and he who had sat at table with his father in the castle, were two quite different persons. And this thought, he knew not why, filled him with a strange horror.

Biörn recovered, and seemed to have entirely forgotten the incident of the pilgrim. He hunted in the mountains, and fought out many a fierce feud, in which Sintram, as he grew, was his constant companion; and this wild comradeship year by year nourished in the boy

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a fearful strength of mind and body. His lean nervous form, his sharp white face and dark eyes, so wild in their glances, inspired fear wherever he went. Yet no man hated him, not even those whom he had insulted or injured in his most lawless moods. Perhaps this was due in part to the kindly presence of old Rolf, who always had a softening influence upon his foster child, but those who had known the Lady Verena while she still lived in the world used to say that upon the face of her son, all unlike her as he was, there yet shone a faint reflection of his mother's grace, which won him many hearts.

Once, it was in the early spring-time, Biörn and Sintram were hunting along the sea-shore beyond the bounds of their own territory; and this less for love of the game they sought, than for the sake of bidding defiance to a neighbouring foe, and so perchance enflaming a feud. Sintram, at this season, having just passed through the yearly terror of his winter-dreams, was all the wilder and more warlike. To-day he was sorely annoyed in that his adversary would not leave his castle, and protect his own game with armed hand, and he cursed with bitter words such tame patience and peace-loving cowardice. Just then a gay young squire of his retinue

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came bounding towards him with a joyful shout:

“Calm yourself, dear young master. I promise you all will yet be well, and turn out according to our desires. I was chasing my wounded prey along the sea-shore, when I caught the glimmer of sails on the water. A ship, full of shining men at arms! What will you wager your foe means to seize you from the shore?”

Glad at heart, Sintram called together his company, determined for once to take the battle upon himself, and surprise his father as a conqueror, with prisoners and spoil of arms. Well versed in every cleft and cranny of the coast, the huntsmen had quickly formed an ambush round the anchorage. The strange ship floated nearer and nearer with all sails spread, and now she lay quiet in the bay, unconscious of the hidden danger. Heedless and light of heart the crew began to come ashore.

Now in the midst of them, and nobler far than them all, was a knight, clad in steel-blue armour richly decorated with gold. His head was bare, for his helmet of pure and precious gold hung upon his left arm, as he looked around him in kingly wise. And his face was gracious to behold, encircled by dark brown

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hair, while a free and joyous smile gleamed from the shadow of his silken beard.

Sintram could not help feeling that he had seen this knight somewhere before, and he stood a moment, motionless. Then, suddenly lifting his arm, he gave the preconcerted signal for attack. In vain Rolf, who had only just succeeded in overtaking his wild charge, whispered to him that this was not the foe he sought, but some noble foreign knight.

"I care not," answered the angry Sintram. "Let them be who they will, they have lured me with a false hope and they shall pay for it. Say no more if you love your life or mine."

And he gave the signal.

Thick as hail from all sides fell the flying spears, and the Norse warriors advanced with flashing blades.

They met with as brave a defence as they could have wished, perhaps even braver. Soon more of the assailants than the assailed lay bleeding, and these foreigners seemed to be astonishingly well acquainted with the Norse manner of fighting. The knight in armour of steel and gold, had not found time to put on his helmet, but he seemed to think it hardly worth the trouble. His gleaming sword protected him well enough, warding off the flying javelins with lightning swift-





OUR FOREFATHERS WERE RIGHT AFTER ALL ABOUT THE VALKYRIES

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ness, and by such powerful strokes that they often fell broken to the ground.

At first Sintram had not been able to get near him, for every man, eager to capture such noble quarry, had pressed closely round him. But now, wherever he turned, the way was clear enough, and Sintram sprang forward, brandishing his sword and shouting his battle-cry. "Gabriela," cried the strange knight, and easily intercepting Sintram's powerful stroke by a rapid under-thrust, smote him on the breast with his sword hilt. Sintram fell, and saw his foe's lifted dagger above him, felt his knee upon his breast. Swiftly, the stranger's retinue formed a circle round him like a wall. Sintram seemed lost beyond hope.

Ready to die as became a fearless warrior, he gazed upon the weapon of doom with wide-open eyes, undismayed.

As he thus gazed a vision seemed suddenly to float in the sky above him, the vision of a most fair woman in a sky-blue garment bright with gold.

"Our forefathers were right after all about the Walkyries," he muttered. "Strike, my unknown conqueror."

But the knight stayed his hand. For this vision was no Walkyrie, but his own lovely

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wife, who had just come forward on the ship's high deck, and so standing, had seemed to shine from heaven into Sintram's upturned eyes.

Her sweet voice sounded:

"Folko," she called, "spare the conquered, as you are a blameless knight."

Folko sprang up, gave his hand to the fallen youth with grave courtesy, saying:

"Thank the noble Lady of Montfaucon for your life and freedom. But if you are so devoid of grace and good as to wish to renew the strife, I am ready."

But Sintram, sore ashamed, sank upon his knees and wept. For this was his near kinsman the Frankish Baron Folko of Montfaucon, and he had long known the fame of his prowess and the beauty of his gracious lady, Gabriela.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE baron gazed in astonishment upon his strange opponent. But as he gazed, remembrance arose within him, remembrance of that northern race from which his ancestors had sprung, and with whom he had always maintained a friendly intercourse. The golden bear's claw fastening Sintram's cloak confirmed him.

"Have you not a powerful cousin," he asked, "called Arinbiörn the Sea King, the same who wears golden vulture wings upon his helm? And is not your father the Knight Biörn? For surely the bear's claw upon your breast is the armorial badge of your race?" Sintram assented in deep humility and shame.

Montfaucon gravely suffered him to rise, saying, in a low voice:

"Then we are kinsmen. But I never could have believed that one of our honourable house would fall upon a peaceful man without cause and without warning."

"Put me to death," Sintram answered, "if I am still worthy to die by your stainless

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hand. Let me not longer see the light of the sun."

"Because you have been defeated?" asked Montfaucon.

Sintram shook his head.

"Or because you have done an unknightly deed?"

The boy's hot flush of shame answered for him.

"Then you must rather live to make amends, and to brighten your name with many a fair deed. Are you not blessed with courage, and bodily strength, and the keen eye of a leader? Had you but fought in a good cause as well as you have in a bad, I would have dubbed you knight without delay. See to it that I have not long to wait. You may still be a vessel of honour."

A joyous sound of pipes and cymbals broke in upon their speech. Gabriela, fair as the dawn, was coming on shore, followed by the train of her ladies. Folko told her in a few words who his late opponent was, and she believed the whole struggle to have been a trial of strength.

"You must not let it vex you, noble lord," she said, "that my husband has won the prize; for you must know that till now there is but one man in the whole world whom the Baron

of Montfaucon has not overcome. And who knows whether that would have happened," she added, laughing, "had he not taken upon himself just then to win the magic ring away from me, from me his lady, assigned to him by God and by my own heart."

Smiling, Folko bent to kiss his gracious lady's snow-white hand. Then he begged Sintram to lead them to his father's castle. Rolf undertook the landing of the horses and treasure, and his heart was glad within him, for it seemed to him that this lady was indeed an angel come hither for his dear young lord's healing and salvation.

Sintram had despatched messengers on all sides to seek his father, and announce the noble guests. So, when they reached the castle, they found Biörn there before them and all things made ready for a ceremonious reception. Gabriela shivered as she stepped into the great dark hall. The lord of the castle, with his flaming eyes, and Sintram's pale face and hair like night did not reassure her, and she murmured below her breath:

"O! my knight, what dreadful place is this to which you have brought me? Would we were at home again in my flowery Gascony, or in Normandy, your knightly land."

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But when she saw the welcome they received; when she saw Biörn and Sintram bend low in grave reverence before her beauty and her husband's fame, her heart took courage. And soon her bird-like curiosity and pleasure were awakened by this new, strange world and all its unknown ways. Nor could her womanly misgivings long continue while her lord was near. For she knew with what a strong protecting hand the great baron guarded what was dear to him and in his care. They were now sitting to rest in the great hall. And through this Rolf and Folko's servants were obliged to pass carrying the baggage to the upper rooms. As they did so, Gabriela noticed her lute, and told one of the pages to bring it to her that she might see whether it had suffered from the sea voyage. As she bent over the beloved instrument, tuning it with delicate care, while her lovely fingers wandered over the shining strings, a smile, like the passing of spring, illuminated the dark faces of Sintram and Biörn, and they murmured, as though involuntarily:

"Ah, if she would only play, and sing one little song, how heavenly that would be!"

The lady looked up at them, pleased and smiling, nodded a gentle assent and sang to her lute's accompaniment:

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When the flowers awaken  
At the touch of spring,  
Then sweet songs muster,  
And sweet things cluster,  
Save one, one only has taken wing.  
What was its name that I used to call?  
Alas! Alas! I can name it never,  
For dear it was to me over all  
And now it will know me no more for ever.  
Ah, nightingale, sing not so sweetly on high,  
Amid the branches calling,  
For my heart must break with thy melody,  
Must break and flow,  
Lost in thy melody's rising and falling,  
Ah, sing not so;—  
For the flowers will awaken,  
And, cloud o'ershaken,  
The rapturous spring;  
But one, the sweetest of all,  
Mine that I used to call,  
Has taken wing.

The two Norsemen had listened in a rapt silence as though enchanted. Sintram seemed transfigured by the song. His eyes shone, and his features were flushed and softened. Old Rolf, who had remained standing while the music continued, lifted up his hands in fervent gratitude to the good God.

Gabriela, in her astonishment, could not take her eyes from Sintram's face. At last she said: "Tell me, my young lord, what there is about this little song to impress you so deeply?"

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It is only a simple spring song, and in my native land there are thousands like it repeating and echoing from diverse hearts the season's beauty."

"Have you, indeed, such a land," cried Sintram enraptured, "such a marvellous, music-dowered land? Ah! then I wonder no more at your unearthly beauty, no more, no more at its power over my frozen, bewildered heart. For surely such a song-paradise must send its messengers over the rest of this cold, hapless earth."

He sank upon his knees before her and hid his face, in deep humility.

Folko smiled, well-pleased. But Gabriela seemed frightened, and at a loss how to treat this wild Norseman half tamed by her influence. After a moment she gave him her hand, and said, lightly uplifting him:

"He who finds so deep a joy in song must himself know how to awaken it. Take my lute and give your soul's music utterance."

But Sintram gently declined the instrument, saying:

"God guard these frail strings and slender stops from my unruly hand! At first I might be careful not to hurt it, but in the end my wild indwelling spirit would break out under the music's might, and then it would be all

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over with the gentle thing. But let me fetch my great harp, with the strings of bear's sinews, and the brass-bound frame. Then, truly, I shall feel inspired to sing and to play." Gabriela murmured an assent, half-pleased and half-afraid. And swift as an arrow Sintram had brought his wonderful harp, and in a voice hardly less powerful than its deep resounding tones, he sang the following song:

"Whither away in the roaring gale?"

"To the south, to the south I'm spreading my sail."  
Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

"I've measured long miles in snow and in sleet;  
Now will I dance in clover sweet."

Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

By star and sun he sailed away,  
And anchored fast in Naples Bay.

Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

There on the shore was a peerless maid,  
Her hair entwined with a golden braid.  
Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

"God save and keep thee, fair and fine!  
This very day will I make thee mine."  
Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

"My lord, I am a Margrave's bride,  
And this very day is my wedding tide."  
Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

"Let him come hither and prove his might.  
The victor shall have thee by victor's right."  
Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

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“Some other lady my lord must find.

There are garlands of beauty for Love to bind.”

Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

“My heart is set upon thee alone,

And the whole wide world is a hollow stone.”

Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

Down came the bridegroom in wrathful wise.

A grass-grown grave was his battle’s prize.

Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

The hero’s laugh rang far and wide:

“Now mine are castle and land and bride.”

Oh for the land of the lovely flowers!

Sintram ceased, but his eyes still shone like fire, and the resonant strings of his harp were loath to be silent. Old Biörn had drawn himself up in pride where he sat, stroked his great beard, and lovingly fingered his sword.

The wild song, and the strange, wild faces filled Gabriela with fear. But then her eyes fell upon Folko, her lord, who sat there smiling and careless, letting the tumultuous music pass him by like the rustle of an autumn storm.

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

ONE evening at twilight, a week or two later, Sintram came down into the garden of the castle, deeply troubled. Gabriela's influence had no power over him beyond the circle of her presence, and his wild heart, quieted and soothed by the spell of her beauty, became all the wilder in solitude. So to-night; she had been reading to his father for a long time from an old book of heroic tales, and now she had gone up again into her own rooms. From there the sound of her lute came wandering down to Sintram in the garden, but it seemed only to bewilder him, and he fled from it into the deeper shadow of the aged elms. Turning sharply round a corner thick with foliage he all but ran into something which seemed at first sight like a little bear standing on its hind legs, with a long, curiously-twisted horn on its head. He started back, horror-stricken, whereupon it spoke with a snarling human voice.

“Young blood! young headstrong knight’s blood! Whence? Whither? Why so startled?”

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And now Sintram saw that it was a little man, oldish, dressed in shaggy furs so that his features could hardly be seen, and with a long, strange feather in his cap.

"Whence and whither you yourself?" retorted Sintram angrily. "How dare you question me? And what right have you here in our castle garden, you ugly little fellow?"

"Come, come," was the laughing answer, "such as I am, I think I am quite big enough. We cannot all be giants. And what harm is there in my hunting for snails here? They are not reckoned with the great game which your learned knighthood reserves for itself alone. Yet I know how to make delicious, spicy drinks from them, and I have caught enough for to-day: wonderful, fat beasts, with clever faces, like men, and long, curiously-twisted horns on their heads! Would you like to have a look at them my young lord? See then!"

And he began to fumble at the fastenings of his fur dress. But Sintram was seized with a shuddering abhorrence, and said:

"I loathe such creatures. Tell me, instead, who and what you really are?"

"You set great store by names!" answered the little man. "Let it content you that I am a very learned master in all secret knowledge,

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and rich, too, in old, intricate stories and legends. Ah, if you only heard them! But you are afraid of me."

"Afraid of *you*," laughed Sintram, scornfully.

"It has happened to better men than you," muttered the dwarfish master, "only they did not care to own it any more than you do."

"I will prove you wrong," answered Sintram. "I will be your companion here until the moon is high in the heavens. But you must tell me your story."

The little man nodded, well-pleased, and while the two walked up and down the long elm avenue, he began as follows:

"Many hundreds of years ago there was a fair young knight, and they called him Paris of Troy. He lived in the sunny south, the land of richest flowers, and sweetest songs, and loveliest women. You yourself, my lord, know a little song about it: 'Oh, for the land of the lovely flowers!' Am I right?"

Sintram nodded assent, and a deep sigh rose from his breast.

"Now," continued the master dwarf, "Paris had the gift of song like most of his countrymen. He used to live for months at a time in shepherd's attire, wandering in the woods and fields, piping, and tending his flocks. And

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once, while he was there, three lovely enchantresses appeared to him, in dispute over a golden apple. And they asked him to judge between them which of the three was the fairest, for she was to win the golden fruit. Now the first had thrones and sceptres and crowns in her gift; the second could inspire the heart with wisdom; the third had the skill of love potions and spells, and the favour of fair women to bestow. So each of the three offered of her best to the shepherd knight, that so she might win the apple. But his heart was set upon fair women above everything in the world, and so he gave judgement that the third was the fairest; and she was called Venus. The other two departed in anger, but Venus bade him lay aside his shepherd's dress, and put on his knight's armour once more, and his hat with waving plumes. Then she led him to a great town called Sparta where the rich Duke Menelaus ruled, with his young duchess, Helen. Now Helen was the most beautiful woman in the whole world, and the enchantress intended her to be the knight's recompense for the golden gift. Paris was right willing; only he asked how he was to set about it."

Sintram interrupted the story:

"Paris was a fine knight," he said. "Such

things are easily done. You challenge the husband to single combat, and the winner has the lady."

"But the Duke Menelaus was the knight's host."

"Listen, dwarf," cried Sintram, "he should have asked the enchantress to give him some other beauty, and swiftly saddled his horse, or lifted anchor, and away."

"Easy to say! Easy to say!" answered the little old man. "But had you once known the loveliness of Helen you would not have thought of an exchange." And in glowing words he began to describe the beauty of this wondrous woman. But feature for feature, the image was Gabriela's, and Sintram staggered, so that he had to lean against a tree for support. The master dwarf stood watching him, and said, laughing:

"How now? Would you still have counselled the poor Knight Paris to flee?"

"Tell me quickly what happened," stammered Sintram.

"The enchantress was honourable towards the knight," the old man continued. "She told him beforehand that as sure as he carried off the fair duchess to Troy, so surely it would be the doom of himself and his town and his whole race, but he should first defend

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himself in Troy for ten long years, and take joy in Helen's sweet love. This was the offer."

"And he took it, or he was a fool!" Sintram cried.

"Certainly," murmured the dwarf, "certainly he took it. And I myself should have done the same. See, my lord, it happened then, just as it might happen now. The moon had newly risen, throned upon dim and silent clouds, and her light fell even as now between the network of the orchard branches. Leaning against an old tree stem, as you are doing now, stood the Knight Paris, slender and fair, and by his side Venus the enchantress, but so disguised and bewitched that she can hardly have looked much handsomer than I am. And in the silver moonlight, between the whispering boughs, came the lady, wandering alone, as though wafted by some wind of destiny in answer to the heart's desire."—

He was silent, and as if in the mirrored spell of his words, Gabriela's very self was seen softly approaching down the long elm avenue, and she was alone.

Sintram spoke in a trembling whisper:

'Master! Terrible dwarfish master, whatever be your name, what is your will with me?"

The answer came.



GABRIELA'S VERY SELF WAS SEEN SOFTLY APPROACHING

EDMUND J. SULLIVAN - 1901



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“Do you know your father’s strong castle,  
the Steinburg on the Rock of the Moon?  
Are not its warder and retainers loyal and  
true? It would withstand a ten years’ siege,  
and see, the little mountain doorway stands  
open, just as it did for Paris long ago in the  
ducal fastness of Sparta!”

Sintram lifted his eyes, and verily the door stood open, he knew not how, and through it he saw the endless chain of mountains shining peacefully in the moonlight. He heard the dwarf laugh and repeat his own words.

“And he took it, or he was a fool!”

At that moment Gabriela was close beside him. He could have encircled her with the slightest motion of his arms, and a sudden moonbeam lit up her heavenly beauty. He made a movement towards her.

O God, my trust,  
Now turn to dust  
His heart’s wild worldly craving!  
Call him to-night  
To Heaven’s own light,  
Be it through sorrow’s saving.

It was the voice of Rolf, who was praying alone by the quiet shores of the castle lake, and the song was heavy with the burden of his fears. The sound of it pierced to Sintram’s

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ear, and he stood spell-bound and made the sign of the cross; and the dwarf with a strange awkward swiftness leapt on one leg through the door, closing it behind him with a clang. Gabriela shrank back in terror at the harsh noise. Sintram drew near, and gave her his arm, saying gently:

“Let me take you home to the castle. The night is apt to be somewhat wild and terrifying here in our northern mountains.”

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

**I**N the castle hall they found the two knights at table. Folko was in the middle of a story, in his usual manner, genial and vivid. Biörn's face was dark as he listened; yet it seemed that the cloud upon his brow was being gradually dispelled, as it were against his will, by a kindlier mood.

Gabriela smiled to the baron, signed to him to continue his tale, and took a seat near Biörn, attentive and pleased. Sintram, abstracted and melancholy, stood apart by the fire and stirred the embers, which threw a strange glow upon his pale face.

"And among all the German seaports," Montfaucon continued, "the town of Hamburg is the greatest. We, of Normandy, are right glad to see her merchants when they land upon our shores, and are ever ready to stand by them in word and deed, for their honesty and good sense. So, when I in my turn found myself at Hamburg, I was made honourably welcome. Moreover it happened that just then they were in a feud with a

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neighbouring count, and my sword availed to win them immediate victory."

"Your sword! Your noble, knightly sword!" Biörn interrupted him, and the old flame leapt into his eyes. "Against a knight! for a pack of hucksters!"

"Knight," said Folko quietly, "it has always been the custom with the Barons of Montfaucon to decide for themselves and without advice how they will use their swords and in what cause. I, who have inherited this good custom, intend to continue it. If you have anything against this, say so frankly. But remember that I will brook no uncivil word about the men of Hamburg, who, as I have already told you, are my friends."

Biörn lowered his proud eyes, and their glow faded.

"Speak on, noble baron," he said, in a low voice, "you are right, and I am wrong."

In answer Folko held out a friendly hand across the table, and then continued his story.

"My best friends among them all were a father and son, men of a wide and wonderful experience. What things have they not seen and done at the farthest ends of the earth? What benefits have they not given to their native town? My life is not so empty, thank God, but when I compare myself with

the wise Gotthard Lenz and his valiant son Rudlieb I feel like a boy who has seen a couple of tournaments, and perhaps in hunting has been so far as the borders of his own land. They have conquered, and converted, and showered blessings upon the heathen in countries whose very names I do not know, and whatever riches they bring home are given as a thing of course to the common good. After one of their long voyages, their first visit on reaching home is to the hospital they have built for the sick, where they are overseers and also most humble servants. After that they inspect the site of the strong towers and fortifications which are rising for the defence of the land: and this too is their doing. Then away again to preside at a feast for the entertainment of pilgrims and strangers. And last of all they sup in their own house in the midst of their friends, proud and rich as kings, fresh and free as shepherds; and the choice meat and rare wine is seasoned by many a tale of past adventure and peril. One among others I heard them tell at which my very hair stood on end, and perhaps you can throw some light upon how it really happened. It was some years ago, just about the holy Christmas time, and a fierce winter storm had wrecked

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them upon the coast of Norway. They could not tell with any certainty at what exact point of the rocks their ship had stranded, but thus much is sure, that not far off rose a great castle, and thither Gotthard and Rudlieb repaired, to crave hospitality and help according to the good Christian custom, leaving their followers, meanwhile, beside the injured ship. The castle gates were thrown open for their entrance, and they believed that all was well, when suddenly the court was filled with armed men, whose sharp steel-pointed lances were all turned against the hapless strangers. No dignified remonstrances, no conciliatory prayers availed. Their only answer was a dead silence or hoarse, scornful laughter. At last down the steps from the hall came a knight, a knight with flaming eyes, and they could not tell whether he was a mad heathen or a spectre. He gave a sign, and the lances closed their death-bearing circle about the two. Then, suddenly, sounded the sweet, flute-like cry of a woman's voice calling upon the Saviour, and while the threatening spectres turned wildly upon one another, the castle gates fell apart and Gotthard and Rudlieb fled in safety. As they passed out they were aware of a fair woman's angelic figure leaning from a lighted window. In fearful

haste they strove to make their leaky ship seaworthy, trusting themselves rather to the terrors of the deep than to this awful coast; and after many and great dangers they landed at last in Denmark. They believe that the evil place was a heathen castle, but I hold it to have been a ruined fortress, forsaken by man, one of those haunts where infernal spirits carry on their nightly games; for tell me, what heathen could be so devilish as to threaten the ship-wrecked fugitives with death in place of help and shelter?"

Biörn stared straight in front of him as though he were turned to stone. But Sintram moved away from the fire, approached the table, and said:

"My father, let us seek out this god-forsaken haunt, and raze it to the ground. I feel persuaded, I know not why, that this wicked deed is the sole cause of my terrible dreams."

Biörn rose in fury against his son, and once again he might have uttered a dreadful word, but God willed otherwise. The blast of a trumpet broke in upon the stormy scene, the folding doors were solemnly flung apart, and a herald entered the hall.

He bowed gravely and spoke.

"I come hither from Earl Eirik the Old. Two

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days ago he came home from his travels in the Grecian Sea, whither he had gone to take vengeance upon an island called Chios, because there, fifteen years ago, his father was killed by the emperor's mercenaries. But your cousin, the Sea King Arinbiörn, lay at anchor in the bay and spoke of a reconciliation. Earl Eirik would not hear of this, and the Sea King, on his side, said he would never allow the island of Chios to be laid waste, because there the songs of Homer, an old Greek bard, were sweetly sung, and choice wines moreover were drunk. From talking it came to fighting, and so stoutly did Arinbiörn maintain his cause, that our earl lost two ships, and hardly escaped himself in a third which was badly disabled. Now because Arinbiörn the Sea King himself has not yet returned, those who are of his race must expiate this deed for him. So says Eirik the Old. Therefore, will you, Biörn of the Flaming Eyes, recompense the earl as he requires, with cattle and gold and goods? Or will you meet him in battle, seven days hence, on Niflung's Heath?"

Biörn quietly nodded, and answered pleasantly:

"Seven days hence, on Niflung's Heath."

And therewith he held out to the herald a

richly-wrought golden cup full of rare wine, saying:

"Drink, and when you have drunk carry the vessel home with you in your cloak."

"Greet your earl likewise from the Baron of Montfaucon," Folko said, "and tell him that I, too, will be on Niflung's Heath as the Sea King's kinsman, and as cousin and guest of Biörn of the Flaming Eyes."

The herald visibly started at the name of Montfaucon, bowed very low, and after gazing respectfully at the baron, retired.

Gabriela, to whom her knight's conquering prowess was well known, smiled upon him kindly and unconcernedly, and only said:

"Where then shall I stay, Folko, while you go forth?"

It was Biörn who answered:

"I hoped," he said, "that you would descend to remain here in my castle, fair lady. I will leave my son behind as your guardian and servant."

Gabriela thought a moment, and Sintram, who had returned to his musings by the fire, muttered softly to himself or to the leaping flame:

"Yes, that is just how it is likely to happen. It seems to me that the Duke Menelaus also had gone forth on a campaign from his

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castle in Sparta when the fair young Knight Paris met his lady in all her beauty in the twilight garden.”

But Gabriela, shuddering, she knew not why, said suddenly:

“Without you, Folko? And must I miss the joy of seeing you fight, and the honour of tending you in case you are wounded?”

Folko bent in loving gratitude before his lady, and answered:

“Come with your knight, then, since you so will it, you who are his bright inspiring star. It is, indeed, a good old Norse custom that women should be present at the contests of heroes, and no true Norseman would violate or disturb their sanctuary, whence their bright eyes illumine the strife. Unless”—and he looked across at Biörn—“Earl Eirik is haply unworthy of his ancestors?”

“A man of honour,” Biörn assured him.

“Then array yourself and make you ready, my beautiful love!” said Folko, half in speech and half in song, “and come forth with us as fairest arbitress of the battle.”

“Forth! Forth with us to the battle!” sang Sintram, enraptured. And they separated in joy and hope, the others to rest, but Sintram to the woods.

## CHAPTER THE NINTH

NIFLUNG'S HEATH was a region stern and desolate as any in Norway. Here, so it was rumoured, had the young Niflung son of Högne and last of his race, brought a dark and unsuccessful life to its melancholy ending. Here stood old gravestones in solemn circle on the barren waste. Here great eagles nested in solitary oak trees, and sometimes fought hard with each other, until their fierce cries and the loud beating of their wings could be heard far away in the dwellings of men, so that little children shivered in their cradles and old men, who had fallen asleep over the fire, awoke with a start.

The seventh night, the last before the day of battle, was come, and two long processions descended from the hills on either side on to the plain; from the west Eirik the Old, from the east Biörn of the Flaming Eyes. For it was an imperative custom that the combatants should be upon the field sooner than the appointed hour, in token that they sought and did not shun the encounter.

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As soon as they had arrived, Folko gave orders to pitch the tent of sky-blue velvet fringed with gold, which he had brought with him for his fair lady's comfort, upon the most favourable part of the heath. Sintram, meantime, as herald, rode across the plain to Earl Eirik's tent, and made known to him that in his father's company was the peerless lady Gabriela of Montfaucon who would be arbitress of the coming battle. At which pleasant tidings the old Earl bowed low, and called upon his minstrels for a song.

Eirik's valiant warriors,  
Deck yourselves in your armour,  
Gird on shining weapons fit for to-morrow's  
fight!  
Fairest of all fair ladies  
Looking upon your prowess,  
Athwart the roar of battle to-morrow shall  
judge aright.  
Far over distant waters  
Flowing through field and meadow  
Tidings have come to us of a baron's mighty  
fame,  
He who is over against us,  
Ready with threatening sword blade,  
Folko! Now fight your bravest, Eirik's  
valiant men!

The strange sounds floated over the heath and reached Gabriela's ears. She was long used to hear her knight's fame variously

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sung ; but now, as the praise of him swelled upwards to the midnight sky from hostile lips and hearts, she would fain have fallen upon her knees before him. But Folko prevented her, held her upright with a gracious gesture, and pressing a fervent kiss upon her snow-white hand, said :

“To you, dear lady, and not to me, my deeds belong.”

But now the night was over and the eastern sky began to flame. And below upon the heath the day broke in noise and splendour. The clashing of armour, the neighing of horses, the passing of the morning draught in gold and silver cups to the accompaniment of harp and song, while from Biörn’s side a joyous march rang out on trumpets and hunting horns. Montfaucon, attended by his followers in steel-blue armour, led Gabriela to the top of the neighbouring hill. There, safe from the flying spears, she could freely overlook the battle. The glad morning light enhanced her beauty, and as she passed close by Earl Eirik’s camp, his men sank their weapons, and the leaders proudly lowered their tossing crests. Two of Montfaucon’s pages remained at hand for her service, not unwilling to lose the fight for such a gentle office. Then both armies passed before her,

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singing as they went, set themselves over against each other, in battle array, and the fight began.

Hurled by strong hands, the spears of the Norsemen flew far, rebounded ringing from shield and breast-plate, or struck each other in the air as they flew. Now and again, in one or the other host, a soldier fell silently bathed in his blood.

And now Folko of Montfaucon made a charge with his Norman squadron of horse. His shining blade greeted Gabriela as he passed, then with a mighty battle cry he fell upon the enemy's left wing. But he met with a stern resistance. Eirik's foot-soldiers, firm as iron, knelt to receive his attack on their stiff halberds; many a noble steed reared up wounded to death and crushed his rider in his fall; many another, in his own ruin, tore down his enemy as well; Folko, upon his war horse, forced a way through unhurt, a body of chosen knights close behind him. Confusion was falling upon the hostile army, and Biörn's troops were already shouting "Victory!" when a squadron of horse led by Earl Eirik himself charged fiercely against Montfaucon, whose followers, swiftly drawing round him, were diverted by this new attack from the main struggle. Where-



MANY A NOBLE STEED REARED UP WOUNDED TO DEATH



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upon the earl's foot soldiers, on the signal of a strange and piercing cry uttered by some one in the midst of them, began to roll themselves together, closer and closer and closer, as it were into a thick ball. But no sooner had this singular battle formation been constituted, tempting Biörn to surround them, than they once more opened out and fell apart on all sides, like Hecla's mountain when her flames burst forth. So they, too, burst in flaming rage upon the foe that would have hemmed them in, wavering now and faltering before their fierce onslaught. In vain Biörn strove to stem the flying rout. He himself was soon all but swept away in the universal panic.

Silent and motionless Sintram gazed upon the tumult. Friend and foe alike passed him by, avoiding him as though in fear, so ghostly grim he looked in his stillness. He struck no blow to right or left; the battle-axe lay at rest in his hand. Only his flaming eyes rested not, but scanned the enemy's ranks as though he would pierce them through to light upon him who must have kindled this fierce rage of battle. And he succeeded. A little man, clad in strange armour, with long golden horns on his helmet, and a projecting visor hiding his face, stood leaning upon a two-

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edged sickle-shaped halberd, and looked about him, as though he laughed in scorn, at the victory of Eirik's warriors and the flight of the enemy.

"That is he!" cried Sintram. "He it is who is putting us to flight before Gabriela's eyes!" And he sprang upon him with a wild shout. The contest was fierce, but it was soon over. The little man was active and wary, but Sintram, taking advantage of his superior height, struck a shattering blow from above upon the horned helmet, which stretched its wearer groaning on the ground. A hot stream of blood burst forth, the limbs were convulsed a moment, then stiffened in death. And his defeat seemed a signal for the defeat of Eirik's host. In the hearts even of those who had not seen him fall, courage and hope suddenly failed. They wavered, retreated, or ran in wild confusion upon the halberds of the enemy. At the same moment Montfaucon, after a hard struggle, had broken Earl Eirik's standard, unhorsed him, and taken him prisoner with his own hand. Biörn of the Flaming Eyes stood victorious in the midst of the field. The day was his.

## CHAPTER THE TENTH

**I**N full view of both armies, the great baron led Sintram up the hill to where Gabriela in all her beauty was standing. The boy's cheeks were flushed with mingled pride and humility, but his eyes were upon the ground. Both warriors kneeled before her, and Folko said gravely:

"Lady, this young soldier of noble race has earned to-day's prize of victory. Bestow it upon him I pray you with your own fair hand."

Gabriela bent her head in kindly assent, unwound the velvet scarf of blue and gold which she wore, and knotted it to the handle of a shining sword, held in readiness by a page upon a cushion of silver cloth. Then, lifting the precious gift, she smiled upon Sintram, and he was already stooping to receive it, when she paused, turned to Folko, and said:

"Noble baron, can I give scarf and sword to any but a knight?"

At the word Folko sprang lightly to his feet, bowed low before his lady, then, with all solemnity, he dubbed Sintram knight. Where-

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after Gabriela girded him with the sword, saying:

“For the honour of God and of pure women, my young hero. I saw you fight, I saw you conquer, and my heart-felt prayer was with you. So fight and conquer in the time to come, even as to-day, that the light of your fame may shine into my far land.”

And at a sign from Folko, she leaned down and consecrated the new knight with a kiss. Sintram, his heart on fire, yet strangely quieted and healed, rose to his feet in silence, while hot tears fell from his eyes. From all sides glad shouts and martial music greeted his new glory.

But old Rolf stood quietly beside him, looked into his foster-child’s glowing eyes, and uttered his tranquil joy in prayer:

Now has the struggle ending,  
By grace of Heaven’s rich sending!  
The Evil One lies slain.

Meanwhile Biörn and Earl Eirik had been in close and eager talk with one another; not unfriendly as it seemed, for when the conqueror led the conquered up the hill to make him known to the baron and Gabriela, he said:

“We, who were enemies, have become allies. And you, my guests and kinsfolk, I pray you,

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too, to grant him your gracious friendship, for from henceforth he is one of us."

"Grant it, I beg," the old earl said, smiling.

"True, I strove to be avenged, but now, beaten by land and sea I must make the best of it. And thank Heaven there is no dis-honour in yielding to such foes neither here on Niflung's Heath, nor yonder in the Grecian Seas."

Folko signified his assent in a hearty hand-shake, and the reconciliation was solemnized in all affection and sincerity. Then Earl Eirik spoke with Gabriela, and his manner was so grave and courtly that she gazed upon him with a wondering smile, as though upon some aged giant, and gave him her fair hand to kiss.

Sinram, meanwhile, was in earnest talk with his old follower, and his final words came to them:

"But before all else, Rolf, I charge you to bury the valiant stranger whom my battle-axe struck down. Seek out the fairest hill-side for his resting-place, the finest oak tree for his shadowing. But first loosen his visor and look carefully in his face, lest by mistake you bury a living man. Moreover, I would fain know how he looked to whom I owe this peerless battle prize."

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Rolf departed to fulfil his master's command.

Folko turned to Earl Eirik.

"Our young hero there," he said, "is asking about a certain warrior, now slain, about whom I, too, am rather curious. I mean, my lord, that wonderful leader who handled your infantry with such masterly skill, and who has just been laid low by the strength of Sintram's battle-axe."

"Really, you ask me more than I can tell you," answered the earl. "I never set eyes on him until three days ago. It was evening, and I and my men-at-arms were sitting round the fire, forging weapons and singing as we worked. Suddenly, above hammer-clang and song there smote a sound so mighty that we all fell silent and sat as though turned to stone. Presently it was repeated, and we knew it for the blast of some monstrous horn, blown by one who asked admittance at the castle gates. I went myself to open them, and as I crossed the courtyard I found the dogs so terrified by the strange sound that instead of baying they whined and crept away into their kennels. I chid them and called them forth, but not the bravest of them would stir. 'Well,' thought I, 'I will set you an example.' So, grasping my sword fast, I stuck the torch beside me in the ground, and

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ordered the gates to be flung wide. For well I knew that no man would find it easy to enter against my will.

“A loud laugh came to me from without, and the words:

“ ‘Heigh ho! Here are mighty preparations to show one solitary little man the hospitality he asks!’

“And, indeed, I was heartily ashamed when I saw the little fellow who stood there, so small he was, and quite alone. I hastened to welcome him and offered him my hand, but he was still so indignant that he would not touch it. He came in, however, and as he went up he became more friendly, and let me see the golden horn on which he had blown his blast, and a second like it, both of them fastened upon his helmet.

“Up in the hall he behaved very oddly, now merry, now wrathful, now affable, and now malicious; nor could we discern the reason of these swift changes. I would fain have learned whence he came, but being my guest I could not question him. Yet thus much he admitted of himself, that where he lived it was very hot, and he found it bitter cold here in our land. He was familiar too with Constantinople, the Imperial City, and told ghastly tales how there brothers and

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fathers and sons hurled each other from the throne, blinded, maimed and murdered each other. And at last he did mention his name, which sounded Greek and famous, but not one of us could remember it.

"He soon showed himself a first-rate armourer. He knew how to grip and fashion the glowing iron lightly to his will, and in very truth to form it into the most devilish weapons I have ever seen. But I forbade him to do this, for I was resolved to meet you in fight with none but your own weapons, and such as our Norway has always known. He laughed then, and said we should win all the same, spoke of swift manœuvres, wheelings, and the like, and promised that if I would give him the command of my foot-soldiers victory would be certain. 'Sure enough,' thought I, 'a good weapon-maker is a good weapon-wielder.' Yet I wanted to prove him, so contests were held. My lords, you can scarce imagine his might and skill in arms, and though your young Sintram is famed far and wide for a keen, bold fighter, yet I can hardly believe that he has been able to slay such an one as this Greek ally of mine."

He would have said more, but Rolf and the others were seen returning, with looks so ghastly and so pale that involuntarily all eyes

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were turned upon him awaiting his tidings. But he stood in trembling silence.

"Pluck up heart, old friend," said Sintram. "Whatever you have to tell us, from your faithful lips it must be good and true."

"Sir knight," the old man began, "you must pardon us, but we could not possibly bury the unknown knight whom you have slain. If only we had not first opened his visor, his hideous overhanging visor. Such a detestable face grinned out at us from under it, the face of a devil distorted by death. At the sight we all but went mad. God forbid that we should lay hands upon him. Send me rather to dead bears and wolves in the waste, and let me watch the eagles and vultures feasting upon them, anything rather than this."

Every one shuddered and remained a long time silent. At last Sintram, recovering himself, said:

"Dear old friend, these are wild words, the like of which I have never heard you utter until to-day. And you, Sir Eirik, did your Greek ally, when he was alive, seem to you so very hideous?"

"Not that I remember," answered the earl, and he looked round questioningly upon his men. They confirmed his impression. But on a closer inquiry it came out that neither lord

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nor knight nor squire could tell anything at all about the stranger's appearance.

"Then we will see for ourselves," said Sintram, "and also we will bury his body"; and he invited the whole company to go with him. This they did, all except the baron, who remained with his lady in response to her whispered appeal.

He lost nothing by it. For though they scoured Niflung's Heath ten and twenty times from end to end in their search, the body of the mysterious warrior was no longer to be found.

## CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

THE peace and joy which came to Sintram on that day seemed to be something more than a passing sunbeam. Sometimes, it is true, the remembered legend of Paris and Helen would inflame and disturb his heart. Then it needed but a glance at scarf and sword, and the stream of his inner life flowed on again serene and crystal clear. "What more could a man crave than this which is already mine?" he would often say to himself in quiet rapture.

So it continued for a long time. It was already autumn, and the fair northern season was beginning to redden the foliage of the oaks and elms which grew round the castle. Sintram was sitting one evening in the castle garden, and Folko and Gabriela were with him. It was almost the very same spot where he had once met that strange being whom he called the Master Dwarf he knew not why. But all things else were changed. Calm and bright the sun was sinking into the sea. Evening odours were wafted round them. From field and valley far below, rose solitary

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wreaths of mist, the ghostly precursors of  
the dying year.

Then Gabriela put her lute into Sintram's  
hands, saying:

"Dear friend, now that you are always so  
quiet and gentle I can dare to trust you with  
my treasure. Will you not sing us your song  
of the lovely flowers? To me it will sound  
much sweeter than when I heard it to the  
pealing of your terrible harp."

Sinram bent his head, and taking the instru-  
ment began to sing.

Softly and with a delicacy once far from him  
the sounds fell from his lips, and the wild lay  
seemed to transform itself into a blossoming  
garden of Paradise. Gabriela's eyes grew dim,  
and Sintram singing more and more sweetly,  
lifted his enraptured yet longing looks to that  
tearful heaven above him. As the last chords  
died away Gabriela's voice repeated like an  
angel's echo:

"Oh, for the land of the lovely flowers!"

Sintram let the lute sink down, his eyes upon  
the rising stars, his heart full of gratitude.

Then Gabriela leaned towards the baron,  
murmuring:

"How long, oh, how long it is, since we have  
seen our fair castles, our blossoming meadows,





SUDDENLY OLD ROLF STOOD BEFORE HIM

here in this far-away land! ‘Oh, for the land of the lovely flowers!’”

Sintram hardly knew whether he had heard aright, so utterly and instantaneously did he feel himself banished from Paradise. If he had a hope it faded before Folko’s courteous assurance, that his lady’s wish should be fulfilled without delay. The ship lay near the shore, ready to sail. For thanks she gave him a kiss, lightly breathed upon his forehead, and went up with him to the castle, all smiles and song, hanging upon his arm. Sintram, with darkened mind and a heart like stone, was left behind, forgotten.

At last, when night was in the heavens, he rose, all his old tumult let loose within him, and raved up and down the quiet garden, and then fled forth into the wild, moon-lighted mountain.

There he drew his sword, and struck madly at bush and tree, so that they fell crashing as he passed, and the startled night-birds rose up round about him, crying and calling in wild affright, while stag and hind fled far into the quieter depths of the forest.

Suddenly old Rolf stood before him, on his way home from a visit to the chaplain of Drontheim. There, with tears of joy, he had been telling of Sintram’s change of heart,

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how softened, all but healed he was through Gabriela's angelic influence, and how they might dare to hope that the evil dream was vanquished. Him had Sintram's sword all but cut down, unwittingly, in its blind fury. The old man stood in the path before him with folded hands, and sighed from the bottom of his heart:

"Ah! Sintram, my foster-child, my heart's treasure, what has come to you that you rave so terribly?"

Sintram's arm fell, and he stood as though spell-bound, gazing upon his old friend with a thoughtful and troubled look, and his eyes were like fading watch-fires that shine through clouds of mist. At last he said, scarce audibly:

"My good Rolf! My good Rolf! Depart from me. I have no place in your heaven; and if ever a kindly breeze blow open the golden gates for a moment so that I can look into that flowering meadow-land where the good angels dwell, immediately a cold north wind storms icily between, and the clangling doors fall to, and I stand alone outside in the eternal winter."

"Master, dear young knight, ah! listen to me, listen to the good angel within you. Are you not holding in your hand the very sword

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with which that pure lady girded you? Is not that her scarf waving over your stormy breast? Have you forgotten how you used to say that no man could desire more than that which had been granted you?"

"Yes, Rolf, I said it," answered Sintram, and he sank down upon the autumn moss, weeping bitterly, while tears ran down the old man's face.

After a little he raised himself up again and his weeping ceased. The look in his eyes grew cold and grim, and he said:

"Listen, Rolf; I have spent some peaceful, holy days, and I thought it was over and dead with all my terrors. And, perhaps, it might have been so still, even as it would be always day if the sun never set out of the heavens. But ask this poor darkened earth why she looks so sad? Bid her smile and rejoice as once she did. I tell you, she can smile no more, and now that the tranquil pitying moon wrapped in her funeral veil has gone behind the clouds she can weep no more, and she becomes alive in this dark hour to every horror and madness of the night. And you, hinder me not, I tell you, hinder me not. Away, away, after the dying moon!"

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With the last words his voice had risen to a stormy cry. He tore himself free from the old man's terrified grasp, and vanished into the forest.

Rolf knelt down, and wept and prayed in silence.

## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

WHERE the seacoast rises to its highest and steepest, under three half-withered oak trees, the scene perhaps in heathen days of human sacrifice, Sintram stood, leaning upon his drawn sword as though his strength was spent. He was alone. The night was round him, and the pale moonbeams, no longer hidden, pierced quivering through the branches, and revealed the death-like pallor of his face, the enchanted stillness of his posture, his eyes set upon the moving waters far below.

Then there came a rustling in the tall withered grass on his left hand, and something half lifted itself up from the ground, and moaned and muttered and laid itself down again.

And between the two night-watchers these mysterious words were spoken.

“Who are you who rustle so strangely in the grass? Are you of the living or the dead?”

“Name me as you will. Dead am I to joy and heaven. To hell and pain I live.”

“Surely your voice is known to me.”

“Ah, yes!”

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“Are you a restless soul? And was your mortal blood shed here upon this ground long since in heathen sacrifice?”

“A restless soul am I, but no man shed my blood, nor can it be shed by man. Yet I was cast down into an abyss as deep as heaven is high.”

“And there you broke your neck?”

“I live, and shall be living when you are dead and gone.”

“Now it seems to me that you are the mad pilgrim with the dead bones.”

“Not he, not he, though we keep close company together, at times right near and friendly intercourse. And let me tell you, I, too, consider him mad, for when I urge him on and say ‘Take,’ he often bethinks himself and points to the stars; then at other times when I bid him ‘Let be!’ he is apt to lay hold hastily with his clumsy hands and has it in his power to ruin my best hopes. Nevertheless, we are a sort of allies and in a manner kinsmen.”

“Give me your hand, and I will help you up.”

“Oh ho! my brave boy, you might live to repent that. Yet after all, you do help me up. Stand clear a moment!”

The rustling in the grass began again, this

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time with a wilder movement. The moon was darkened, the stars hidden by clouds that crossed and blotted the heavens as though driven in haste upon a far journey. And even so Sintram's mind was shadowed and made afraid by the fate-driven circle of his mysterious thoughts, while still the rustling continued and increased, till grass and herb and tree seemed quick with shuddering life. Until at last the unearthly thing, whatever it was, stood upright. The moon, as though fearfully curious, peered through a cleft in the clouds, and revealed to Sintram's horror-stricken heart the master dwarf standing beside him.

"Be gone!" he cried, "and let me hear no more of your evil stories about the Knight Paris, or I shall go mad."

The dwarf laughed.

"It needs not the story of Paris for that," he said. "It needs but that the Helen of your heart should sail for Montfaucon. Trust me, you are stark mad already. But what if she were to remain? Would that suit you? Then you must be a little more civil to me."

Thereupon the dwarf made his voice go forth over the sea until Sintram shuddered at the sound. But he rebuked himself for his weakness of heart, leaned both hands firmly

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upon the hilt of his sword, and said with a scornful laugh:

“You, and Gabriela! What have you to do with Gabriela?”

“Little enough,” was the dwarf’s answer, and his features were visibly convulsed with fear and pain. “I cannot quite stand the name of your Helen; there is no need to repeat it ten times in a breath. Listen to me: What if the storms were to come? What if the winds were to blow, and the waves to swell and rise, a seething ring of foam round Norway’s coast? That would make an end of the sailing to Montfaucon until the spring, and your Helen would at least stay near you all through the long dark winter.”

“If! if!” repeated Sintram, contemptuously. “Is the sea your slave? Are the winds your servants?”

“They are rebels to me, cursed rebels!” The Master Dwarf snarled it into his red beard.

“You must take a part, Sir Sintram, if I am to control them. But you have no heart for it.”

“Deluding boaster!” Sintram retorted.

“What do you want of me?”

“Little enough, sir knight. Naught at all for anyone with fire and courage in his soul. You have but to gaze hard for half-an-hour right out to sea, nor once to look aside; and while

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you gaze you must desire with all your heart and will, nor ever cease from desiring that the waters may rise and rage and foam, and never be still until the frozen winter stands upon your mountains. Will not that soon sicken the Duke Menelaus of the journey to Montfaucon? But I must have a lock of your hair as well, your black hair that falls round your face like raven's or vulture's plumage."

Wildly Sintram drew his dagger, cut a lock from his hair and threw it to the dwarf; then following his command he gazed out to sea, his whole heart's will in his eyes.

And softly, very softly, the sea began to move, like one who stirs and mutters in an uneasy dream, and would fain rest, but cannot. Sintram was upon the point of giving it up, but he saw a ship in the moonlight pass with white swelling sails to the south. He seemed to see Gabriela sailing away from him, and he compelled himself to desire more and more strongly, his fixed gaze piercing the abyss. Ah, Sintram, Sintram! can you be the same who so lately gazed into the tearful heaven of your lady's eyes?

And the waters rose and swelled and rose, and the tempest came with its myriad voices, while already the white crests of the waves were apparent in the moonlight.

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Then the dwarf threw Sintram's lock of hair high up towards the clouds, and as it fluttered and shook and hovered in the vortex overhead, the storm burst in such a frenzy that sea and sky were merged in one, and from far and near came the agonized deathcry of countless drowning souls.

Then Sintram saw the mad pilgrim with the dead bones, giant high, who seemed to ride and rock upon the surging waters as he passed along the coast, and the ship that bore him was hidden by the hungry leaping of the waves.

"Him you must save, him you must save at all costs!" It was Sintram's voice dominating wind and wave in imperious supplication. But the dwarf laughed.

"You need have no care for him," he said, "He is safe enough. The waves have no power upon him. Look! they are his beggars, and that is why they leap so high about him. And he gives them rich alms, most rich, I promise you."

And verily, as he went, the pilgrim seemed to strew the waters with the bones of the dead, and to pass on unhurt.

Then Sintram was overwhelmed by a great horror, and fled homewards to the castle in frenzied haste. His companion was vanished, faded or flown.



THEN THE DWARF THREW SINTRAM'S LOCK OF HAIR HIGH UP TOWARDS  
THE CLOUDS



## CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

**I**N SIDE the hall Biörn and his two guests still sat round the great stone table, where, before their coming, he had been wont to sup with his mute companions, the suits of empty armour. But these were now removed and lay piled up in an adjoining chamber.

To-night, while the storm made wild onslaught upon the doors and windows of the castle, the old armour, too, seemed to move and shake in the next room, and more than once Gabriela started to her feet in terror, her eyes fixed upon the little iron door, as though she feared to see some mailed spectre walk forth, stooping his mighty helm under the low archway.

Biörn read her thoughts, and said with a wild and wintry smile:

“Fear not. He will never again come through that little door. I have cured him of that.”

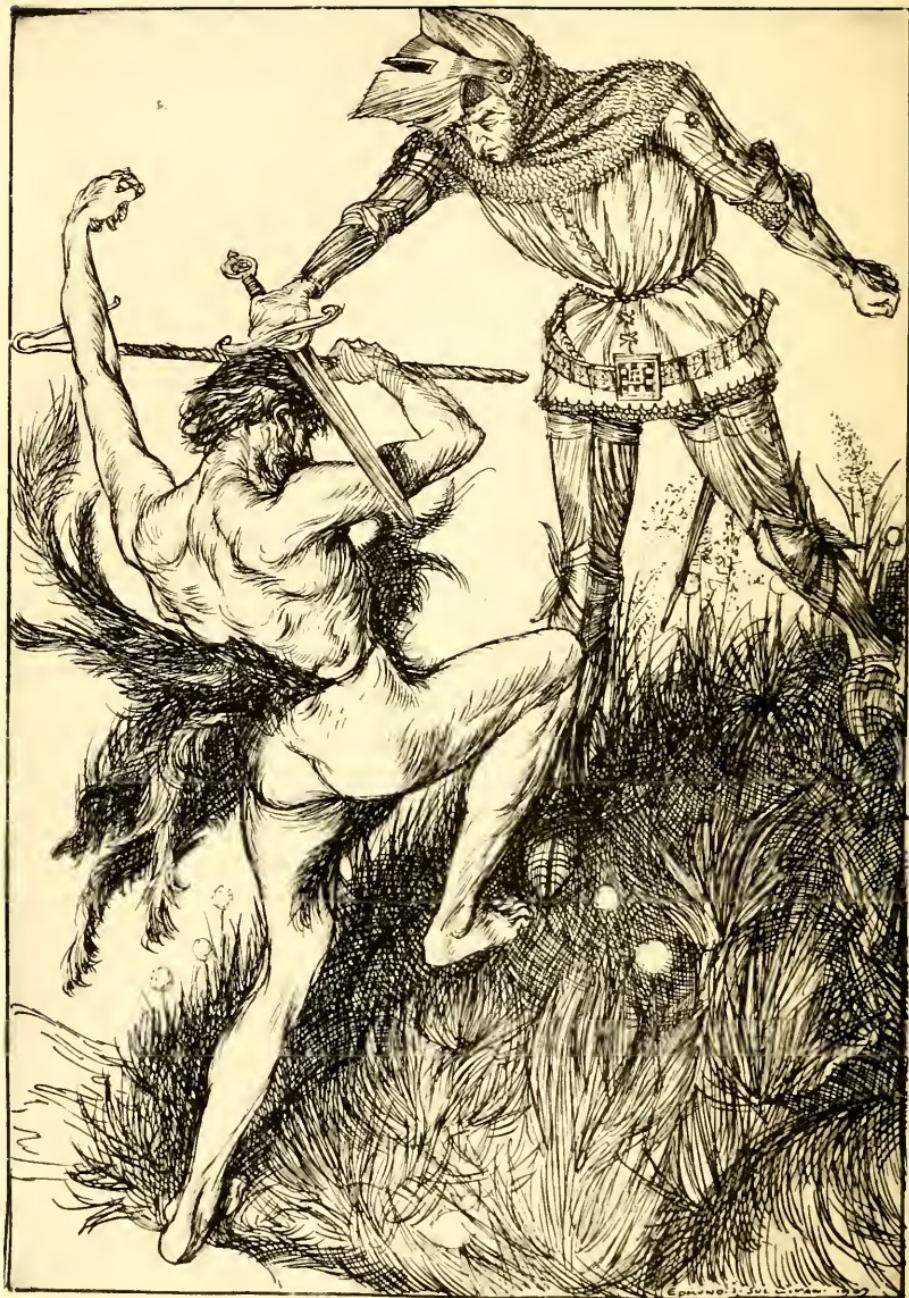
His two guests regarded him doubtfully, whereupon, with a grim quietness, fit counterpart of the outer storm, he began:

“Once I, too, was a happy man. Once I could smile like you, and rise each morning in joy

and peace like you. That was before the canting chaplain had sent my wife mad with his false piety, she, so fair, so wise, and driven her into the cloister, leaving me here alone with our wild, unruly child. It was unkindly done of my fair Verena. Now in the first flower of her youth, before I knew her, she was sought and courted by many a knight; and one among them, Sir Weigand the Slender, she seemed to distinguish above the rest in her gentle favour. It was known to her parents that he was almost her equal in birth and dignity, and already his young fame burned bright and blameless, so that the world looked upon them as betrothed lovers.

“Now it happened, on a day, that as the two were wandering in the castle garden, a shepherd chanced to pass outside, driving his flocks up the mountain. And a snow-white lamb, full of grace and joy, took the maiden’s fancy with its pretty gambols. Weigand, quickly leaping the fence, hastened up to the shepherd and offered him two golden bracelets for the lamb. But the shepherd refused, hardly listened to the knight’s words, and continued his road to the mountain unmoved, Weigand following him closely. Who at last lost patience. He threatened, and the herdsman, obstinate and proud like all our Norse





WITH CLOVEN SKULL THE SHEPHERD TUMBLED INTO THE ABYSS

people, threatened back. For answer a swift blow from Weigand's sword smote him over the head. He had meant it to fall flat, but who can bridle a fiery horse or a drawn sword? With cloven skull the shepherd tumbled into the abyss, bleeding and senseless, while his flock, bleating piteously, fled to the mountains. But the lamb, in terror, ran towards the castle, pressed through the garden fence and crouched, as though craving help, at Verena's feet, its white wool red with its master's blood. She gave it shelter in her arms, and from that hour never suffered Weigand to come into her sight.

"She tended the lamb, and ceased to care for anything else in the world, growing in silence towards heaven like a white lily. She would have taken the veil, but about then it chanced that I came to her father's help in a fierce feud and saved him from his enemy. In gratitude, and for her father's sake, she gave me her hand.

"At that Weigand could bear his anguish at home no longer. He suffered it to drive him forth into Asia, whence our forefathers first came, and there he achieved great things through courage and a humble heart. My heart, too, was strangely moved whenever I heard his name.

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“Some years later he came home, and would fain build a church and cloister upon yonder western mountain slope, from whence he could plainly see our castle walls. There, it was said, he hoped to have himself consecrated a priest, but it fell out otherwise.

“For certain pirate vessels sailed hither from the southern seas, and hearing of the cloister, their captain thought either to find there gold and treasure in charge of the governor and builders, or else to surprise and carry them off and extort a rich ransom. He must surely have known little of our Norse courage and Norse arms, but he soon learned better.

“He landed on the black rocks of yonder bay, crept up by roundabout roads to the building site, and thought his end was achieved. Then how Weigand and his fellow-builders hewed them down with sword and hammer and hatchet. The heathen fled in disorder to their ships, Weigand in hot pursuit.

“His victorious chase led him past our castle, where Verena was standing on the terrace, and for the first time in all those years she greeted him kindly. But at that moment a dagger, thrown backwards by one of the terrified pirates, struck his unhelmeted head, and he sank bleeding and senseless to the ground.

"We drove the heathen off. Then I had the wounded knight carried into the castle, and Verena's pale cheeks glowed like lilies in the red of sunrise. And Weigand smiled upon her as he opened his eyes. He would inhabit no room save this little one where the armour now lies, for he said it felt to him like the quiet cloistral cell which he hoped soon to enter as a penitent. We granted all he asked, and Verena nursed him tenderly. He seemed at first to be on the high road to recovery, but his head was weak and easily bewildered, his face colourless, his steps uncertain and wavering. We could not suffer him to depart. At evening, as we sat together here in the hall, he would come to us gropingly out of that little door, and many a time my heart grew sad and hard to see the tender light that shone in Verena's eyes at the sight of him, and how her pale cheeks glowed like the sunset. But I bore it, and would have borne it to the end. Alas! then Verena went into the convent!"

His face fell forward upon his clasped hands, till the stone table seemed to groan with his weight, and for a while he was still as death. When he raised his eyes they were full of wrath and pain as they rolled round the room, and lighting upon Folko he said:

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“Gotthard Lenz and his son Rudlieb, your precious men of Hamburg, were partly to blame for that. Who told them to run their ship ashore so near my castle?”

Folko turned a piercing glance upon his host, and a terrible question was on his lips, but a second glance at the trembling Gabriela silenced him, at least for the present, and Biörn continued his tale.

“Verena was with the nuns, and I was alone. The whole day long my grief would not let me rest but had driven me forth by forest and mountain and torrent. In the twilight I came back to my desolate and empty home. I had hardly entered the hall when yonder little door creaked upon its hinges and Weigand came slowly towards me. He had slept through it all. ‘Where is Verena?’ he said. Then a madness seemed to seize me and I howled upon him with wild grimaces:

“‘She is gone mad, and I am mad, and you are mad. And so now we are all mad!’

“Holy God! at my words the wound in his head broke forth, and the dark life-blood streamed over his face; alas, how all unlike the rosy hue which mantled it at that first vision of Verena in the castle gate! He raved upon me and ran out into the wild night, and

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ever since then he roves and wanders as a mad pilgrim."

Biörn was silent, and Gabriela was silent, and Folko was silent, all three cold and white as death. Softly and wearily the grim speaker added these words :

"Once only since then has he sought me here, but he will never again come out through that little door. Tell me, have I not made peace and order in my castle?"

## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

In a kind of frozen stupor they separated for the night, and nobody remembered Sintram nor thought to ask where he was, for each breast was heavy with dark, uncertain forebodings, and even Folko's valiant heart beat high.

Sintram had not come home, and old Rolf still sat weeping in the woods, heedless that his white head was unsheltered from the storm, while he waited for his young lord. But Sintram was in far distant ways, and it was not until daylight that he returned to the castle from the other side.

Gabriela had slept sweetly through the night. The terrors of the evening were banished from her dreams as though by the wafting of angels' golden wings above her pillow, and there came to her instead a vision of the green hills, the bright flowers and waters of her native land. She breathed gently and smiled in her sleep, while outside the magic storm swept howling over forest and mountain, and held battle with the unquiet sea.

But when she woke the next morning, and

still heard every window rattle in the stormy blast, and saw the clouds still hiding the heavens as though with a veil, she could have wept from fear and disappointment; all the more because Folko had risen while she slept and gone forth in full battle array. So her woman told her while she dressed, and even as they spoke she heard the tread of heavy armed men in the echoing halls outside, and learned, on asking, that her lord had summoned his whole retinue to be ready for their lady's defence.

Wrapped in her snowy ermine cloak, she looked in her distress like some frail flower, blossoming out of the snow and shrinking from the winter storms. At that moment Folko of Montfaucon himself entered in all the shining splendour of his armour, his golden helmet with the waving plumes carried peacefully under his arm. His greeting was serious, but serene. At his sign Gabriela's women withdrew, and outside the men-at-arms could be heard quietly dispersing. He led Gabriela, already comforted by his presence, to a couch, and sat down beside her.

"Lady," he said, "you must forgive your knight that he left you for a time in fear and uncertainty; honour and stern justice sum-

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moned him. Now it is settled peacefully and without bloodshed. Forget your fear, and whatever has troubled you let it be as the things that are no more."

"But you and Biörn?" questioned Gabriela.

"On my word of honour as a knight," Folko answered, "all is well between us."

Whereupon, with his accustomed grace and feeling, he began to talk cheerfully of indifferent matters, but Gabriela, deeply moved, leaned against him, and said:

"O Folko, my hero and my life, my shelter and dearest happiness upon earth, let me know all if you can with honour. But if you be bound by a vow I will ask no further. You know I am of the race of the Portamour, and would not willingly tarnish my knight's shield with even the suspicion of a breath of blame."

Folko gazed in front of him very earnestly for a moment, then, smiling kindly in his lady's face, he said:

"There is no vow, Gabriela. But will you be able to bear it, this thing I have to tell? Will it not weigh you to the earth like the burden of snow upon a slender pine-tree?"

She drew herself up, with a certain pride, saying:

"I have just bid you remember my father's

name. Remember also that I am wife to the Baron of Montfaucon."

"So be it," answered Folko, bending his head in grave assent; "and when a dark deed must forth to the light of day, whereunto it is alien and strange, it is best shown suddenly. Know then, Gabriela, that the wicked knight who did his best to slay my friends Gotthard and Rudlieb is none other than our host and cousin Biörn of the Flaming eyes."

Gabriela started and hid her face in her hands. Then, looking about her in amazement, she said:

"Can I have heard aright? though yestereve a suspicion of it did cross my mind. But did you tell me just now that between you and Biörn there was peace, and that all had been settled in quiet amity? Between the noble Baron of Montfaucon and such a man, after such an outrage!"

"You heard aright," answered Folko, and he looked with loving delight upon his fair lady's dauntless spirit. "With the first light of day I went down to him and challenged him to a battle of life and death in a near forest valley, if he were the same who had turned his castle into a place of slaughter for Gotthard and Rudlieb. 'I am he,' he

answered curtly, and followed me forth into the forest. He was already in full armour. But when we were alone on the field of battle, he took off his shield and cast it away from him down the steep hill-side, as well as his battle sword. Then he tore off his coat of mail with mighty hands, and broke it in pieces, saying:

“‘Smite now, for you are my judge. I am a sore sinner, and I dare not fight against you.’

“How could I strike him? Then the strangest reconciliation was made between us. He is in a manner my vassal, yet in my name and in the name of my friends I have solemnly absolved him of his guilt. He was broken-hearted, yet no tears were in his eyes, no friendly word upon his lips. Stern justice alone, which chose me for its instrument, conquered him, and Biörn is my vassal for this life. I do not know, dear lady, whether you can bear to see us together in this way. If not, we must seek hospitality in some other castle. There is none in Norway which would not make us welcome in joy and honour, and this wild autumn storm may well delay our sailing for a long time to come. Yet I verily believe that if we were to depart from him now

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and in such a way his wild heart would break."

"Where my noble lord can dwell, there I, too, will tarry in his shelter without fear."

As Gabriela said these words she realized with rapture the greatness of her knight.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

GABRIELA'S own fair hands removed her lord's armour, for it was only upon the field of battle that she suffered servant or squire to touch it under her orders. She was hanging the sky-blue velvet cloak with the golden border round his shoulders, when the door was softly opened and Sintram came in.

He greeted his guests modestly, and at first Gabriela nodded to him with her accustomed friendliness. But suddenly she turned very pale, and said, averting her face:

"In God's name, Sintram, what has come to you? And how can one single night have had the power to change you so fearfully?"

Sintram stood still as though thunderstruck. For indeed he knew not how he looked nor what had befallen him.

Then Folko took him by the hand and led him up to a shield which shone bright as any mirror.

"Look in, my young knight," he said, very gravely.

Sintram looked and started back in horror.



"LOOK IN, MY YOUNG KNIGHT" HE SAID, VERY GRAVELY



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For he seemed to see the face of the master dwarf, looking out at him, with the single upright feather in his strange cap. But a second glance showed him plainly that the image was himself and none other, and it was only the wild dagger-cut in his hair that gave him such an alien and spectral look.

“Whose work is that?” asked Folko, still very grave and stern. “And what midnight horror has swept your torn, dishevelled locks heavenward?”

Sintram knew not what to reply. He felt that he was standing before the judgement seat, and that his knighthood was in peril.

Then suddenly Folko led him away from the shield, approached the wind-shaken casement, and said:

“Whence comes this storm?”

Still Sintram was silent, and his limbs shook under him. Pale and trembling, Gabriela whispered:

“O Folko, my hero, tell me, what has happened? Have we sought shelter in a sorcerer’s castle?”

Folko answered her seriously.

“Our native Norway,” he said, “is rich in many a secret art. Yet it would hardly be fair to call the people sorcerers. Nevertheless our young friend had best beware in

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time. Let the Evil One lay hold upon him  
but by a single hair—”

Sintram waited to hear no more. He staggered, groaning, from the room.

Outside old Rolf met him, all but frozen by the tempests and hailstorms of the night. His heart was so full of joy at the sight of his young lord that he did not notice Sintram's agitated looks; but he said as he attended him to his chamber:

“Witches and sorcerers have surely had a hand in this. So turbulent a change of weather does not come about save by unholy arts.”

Sintram sank down, insensible, and it was with difficulty that Rolf could sufficiently restore him to go down to the midday meal in the great hall. But before he went he called for shield, mirrored himself once more, and drawing his dagger, in shuddering haste he cut off the remainder of his long, black hair, till he looked almost like a shorn monk, and so he descended to the hall where the others were already seated at table.

All eyes were turned upon him in amazement. But Biörn started up savagely at the sight.

“What! are you for the cloister too, like your lady mother?”

An imperious sign from the Baron of Mont-

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faucon checked a further outbreak; and as though to pacify him, Biörn added, with a forced smile:

“I thought, perhaps, he was like Absalom, and could only save his head by the loss of his hair.”

“Jest not with sacred things,” said the baron sternly, and all were silent at his words. At the close of the meal, Folko and Gabriela, with a grave and courteous greeting, retired to their own rooms.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

FROM that day the life in the castle took an entirely new form. The two noble guests, Folko and Gabriela, were now almost always in their own rooms, and when they did appear they were grave and silent, and Biörn and Sintram stood humbly in their presence. Yet the lord of the castle could not bear the thought of his guests' departure to other hospitality than his. Once, when Folko spoke of it, something like a tear gathered in his proud eye, and he bent his head, saying in a low voice:

“As you will. But the day you go I think I shall throw myself over the cliff.”

So they remained together, for sea and sky were never still, but stormed and raged unceasingly, and the journey to Montfaucon was not to be thought of. Never had such an autumn been known in Norway. The old men looked back into the past of their remembrance and shook their heads. The priests turned over their Runic books from end to end; the bards and minstrels searched

sagas and songs of old, but they found nothing like it.

Biörn and Sintram scorned the tempest. During those few hours when Folko and Gabriela were accustomed to appear, father and son were always in the castle in courteous attendance; but the rest of the day, and often all through the night, they rode out, by forest and mountain, and hunted the bear. Meanwhile Folko summoned to his aid every grace and courtesy of his spirit, that he might charm Gabriela to forget the dreary castle and the wild northern winter which must hold them frost-bound for many a month to come. Sometimes he told fairy tales; sometimes he made sweet music and begged Gabriela to step a measure with her ladies; sometimes, giving the lute to one of her maidens, he himself mingled in the dance. Each hour he showed her his devotion and homage in some new way. He arranged tourneys among his men-at-arms in the spacious halls of the castle, and Gabriela rewarded the victor with some precious gift; or he would himself enter the lists, but he only parried the attacks of his opponents and robbed no one of the prize. The Norsemen who looked on used to liken him to the demi-god Balder, the hero of their old saga world,

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when he suffered the other gods to attack him, in sport, well assured of his divine immunity from peril.

Once, after such a display of arms, old Rolf went up to him, called him aside with a friendly gesture, and said in a low voice:  
“They call you Balder, the strong fair god; and they are right. But take heed. Even the fair strong Balder was slain at last.”

Folko looked at him, surprised.

“Not that I know of snares or ambush that threaten you,” continued the old man, “not the least suspicion of it. God guard any Norseman from such a fear. But when I see you so bright and strong and dauntless, I cannot but remember how fleeting are all things earthly, how transitory and unstable. Take heed, dear lord, take heed! The fairest flower must fall, the brightest glory fade.”

“It is a good and pious thought, my father,” said Folko, kindly, “and I will cherish it watchfully in my heart.”

Rolf spent much of his time as a rule with Folko and Gabriela, and was a kind of bond between the two households in the castle, else so separate. He would never desert his dear Sintram, but was too old now to follow him in the perils of the chase through storm and rain.

But now the frozen winter was come in its cold majesty. The voyage to Normandy was impossible, and the magic tempest ceased. Mountain, plain and valley glittered in their frosty festival dress, and while Folko with skates on his feet drew his lady's light sled, swift as the wind, over the ice-bound lakes and streams, crystal clear below them, the bear-hunt, in another direction, lured Sintram and his father ever further with its dangerous joys.

About this time—Christmas was drawing near, and Sintram strove in this wild hunting to drown the terror of his approaching dreams—about this time Folko and Gabriela were standing together on the castle terrace. It was a mild evening, and the snowy scene looked fair and peaceful in the late beams of the setting sun. From the forge below them came the voices of the men singing songs of old heroic times as they worked. Then for a while the song was silent, the hammer-stroke rested, and they began to talk, the speakers invisible, the voices unknown.

“Of all who can claim descent from our northern races, who is the bravest?” one asked.

“Folko of Montfaucon,” came the answer.

“Right. But now tell me, is there no brave sport which the noble baron shuns?”

“Truly there is such a one. And we who dwell at home in Norway practise it easily, with glad hearts.”

“And that is—?”

“The bear-hunt in winter, down frozen abysses, over ice-bound, endless plains of snow.”

“Right again, comrade. He who cannot bind our snow-shoes on his feet and turn upon them swiftly to right and left, he may be a brave and powerful knight in all else, but here in our mountains, in our hunting, he had best stand aside, and stay safely at home with his fair wife.”

They could hear the speakers laugh, as though well pleased, and then the noise of hammer and anvil began again.

Folko remained a long while deep in thought, and something other than the red of the evening mantled his cheeks. Gabriela, too, was silent, as though pondering. At last she recovered herself and said, embracing her lord:

“To-morrow, you will go forth to the bear-hunt, will you not, and bring your lady the prize of the chase?”

Folko gave a joyous assent, and the rest of the evening was spent in music and in dance.

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH

**T**HE next morning Folko declared his wish to accompany the hunters, but Sintram looked doubtful.

"My lord," he said, "our snow-shoes, which we call ski, are flying runners, swift as the wind downhill, and fast enough uphill to elude pursuit, while on the level plain we can outstrip the fleetest horse. But only a practised master can use them safely. Else, they seem to be possessed by the spirit of some malicious cobold, most perilous to one who has not learned to use them as a child."

Folko answered, somewhat haughtily: "Is this the first time I have been in your mountains? Years ago I knew this sport well, and thank God, no knightly exercise comes amiss to me."

Sintram dared not make any further opposition, still less his father. And both felt reassured when they saw with what speed and certainty Folko strapped the shoes to his feet, suffering none to give him help. The procession started up the mountain, in pursuit of a great bear which had long been

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threatened in vain. Soon they were obliged to separate, and Sintram begged of Folko that he might be his companion. The baron, touched by the boy's deep humility and submission, forgot how uneasy he had felt of late when in the neighbourhood of that white drawn face, and gave him a kindly assent. They climbed up and up into the white mountains, until, looking downwards from one giddy peak or another, the lower-lying heights and hollows seemed like some wild and stormy sea suddenly turned to stone or ice. Montfaucon's heart beat high with joy and freedom. He sang songs of love and war, songs of his native land, and the sound of them rang far in the keen blue air, and echoed back strangely from rock and cliff. He climbed uphill or slid down with equal ease, using his staff for strength and safety, and sweeping to right or left as the spirit moved him, until Sintram's previous doubt was lost in wonder and admiration, and the rest of the hunters, who had never lost sight of the baron, broke into a ringing cheer, proclaiming from one to another this new glory of their guest.

The good fortune which had never failed Folko in his deeds of arms did not forsake him now. After a short search he and Sin-

tram found the clear track of the beast of prey, and followed it up, their hearts beating high with hope and exultation. So swift and stormy was their advance, that not even a winged enemy could have hoped to escape them. But he whom they followed dreamed not of flight. In a hollow cave near the top of the all but perpendicular slope he lay couched, sullen and angry at the noise of his pursuers, waiting only until one or other of them should come within his reach. Folko and Sintram were now close upon him, the rest of the hunting party scattered far and wide. The track still led upwards, and now they separated and continued the ascent on opposite sides of the summit that their prey might in no manner escape. It was Folko who first stood on the lonely peak, and looked round him. A world of snow, wide and trackless, stretched away on all sides as far as eye could see, to mingle on the horizon with the twilight clouds which already darkened the West. He was almost afraid he had lost the track of his prey.

But a deep growl from the cave close at hand reassured him, and a dark clumsy form rose up out of the snow. The bear stood upright and came forward, threatening the baron with its fiery eyes. Sintram, still in strife

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with the loosened masses of snow that hindered his upward way, struggled in vain to reach the height.

Keenly relishing a sport so long unsought that it seemed like something new, Folko of Montfaucon levelled his hunting spear and awaited the monster's attack. He allowed it to come quite close, till he was almost within touch of those grim claws; then he made his thrust, and the iron of the lance pierced deep into the bear's breast. But undaunted, his horrible foe still pressed forward howling and roaring, till only the crossbar of the spear checked it, and the knight had to plant both feet strongly in the ground to withstand the furious pressure, before his eyes the hideous bloodthirsty face of the beast, the hoarse noise of its rage and death agony in his ears.

But at last the monster's strength began to ebb, and its dark blood flowed freely over the snow. It reeled; one more powerful thrust and back it tumbled, voiceless now, down into the sheer abyss. At that instant Sintram stood beside the baron.

Folko drew a deep breath, saying:

"The prize of the hunt is not yet mine, but it shall be, as surely as I have won it. I believe one of my snow-shoes is a little





EDMUND J. SULLIVAN. 1908.

"OH, YES, CERTAINLY; THAT WILL HOLD ALRIGHT!"

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damaged. Do you think it will hold, Sintram, while I glide down the slope?"

"Let me go down instead," Sintram answered, "and I will bring you back the bear's head and claws."

"A true knight does nothing by halves," Folko said, somewhat testily; "I asked you whether my snow-shoe would hold?"

Sintram stooped to look at it, and was just going to say "No," when a voice said suddenly, close beside him: "Oh, yes, certainly; that will hold all right!" Folko, thinking that it was his companion who had spoken, glided swiftly down the slope, and was lost to sight, while Sintram looked round in amazement. He saw the detested face of the Master Dwarf.

An angry word was upon his lips, when he heard the dreadful crash of the baron's fall, followed by a yet more dreadful silence in the abyss, and the horror of it held him dumb. After a little while the dwarf spoke.

"Why do you linger?" he said, impatiently. "He has certainly broken his neck. Now you can go home to the castle and take the fair Helen for your own."

Sintram shuddered. Then his accursed companion began to praise Gabriela's beauty, in words so magical and so vivid that his listen-

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ing heart almost broke with longing, and the fallen knight became no more to him than a torn-down wall of separation between him and the heaven of his desire. He turned towards the castle.

At that moment a cry reached him from far below.

“Sintram! My comrade! help! I live, but I am sore wounded.”

Sintram tried to turn back, and the call “I come” was upon his lips, when the Master Dwarf spoke:

“The poor Duke Menelaus is beyond your help, and his fair Helen knows it by this time. She is only waiting now for Paris to come and console her.”

And with malignant cunning he brought the legend to life, intertwining it with his flame-breathing praises of the living beauty. And alas! the dazzled youth yielded, and fled.

The baron’s call still followed him from afar.

“Knight Sintram! Knight Sintram! You to whom I gave the Holy Order, hasten now and help! The she-bear is coming with her cubs, and my arm is broken. Knight Sintram! Knight Sintram! Hasten and help!”

The cry died away in the distance as the two sped swiftly over the snow. And still as they went, the Master Dwarf mocked and jeered

at the Duke Menelaus, and his haughty treatment of poor Sintram.

"I wish you joy mother bear!" he called at last; "and you, too, my young bear cubs! Now you will make a fine meal. Now you will feast upon the terror of heathendom, the great Baron of Montfaucon, him who has made many a Moorish bride weep. And you, my lordly knight, never again, ah, never again, will you shout at the head of your troops your famous battle cry: 'Mountjoy and St Denis!'"

But hardly had the holy name passed the dwarf's lips, than the sacred power of it struck and distorted him as though in convulsions. He howled aloud in rage and fear, wrung his hands, and fled away into the falling snow.

Sintram struck his staff into the ground and stood still. The wide white plains on every side, the lofty mountains and the pinewoods black as night, all seemed to watch him in amazement, in a stony, threatening silence. He all but sank down under the weight of his misery and his guilt. From far away the plaintive sound of a hermit's bell came to him.

He wept aloud in the deepening night:  
"My mother! My mother! Alas, I once had

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a tender, watchful mother, and she said I  
was a good child!"

As he uttered the words, there came to him a breath of heavenly comfort. Perhaps Montfaucon was not yet dead. Swift as lightning he retraced the road to the precipice.

Once more on the fatal spot, he leaned over the cliff in anxious search. The moon, just rising in all her majesty, came to his aid.

Folkoof Montfaucon, pale and blood-stained, supported himself, half-kneeling, against the sheer wall of rock. He had not been able to draw his sword, for his right arm hung shattered and helpless. Yet still, by the power in his eyes alone, and his majestic aspect, he held off the bear and her young. They slunk round him with low, threatening growls, and still they thought to attack him, and still they were repulsed by his conquering looks, mighty even in helplessness.

"Oh, what an heroic soul might here have perished!" Sintram sighed. "And through whose guilt?"

At the same moment his javelin took its swift yet measured flight, and the bear fell with the death rattle in her throat. Her cubs fled, howling.

The baron looked up, astonished, and his face shone in the moonlight as though trans-

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figured, grave, earnest and gentle. He signed to Sintram to come down, and the next instant Sintram was beside him. He was anxious to tend the baron's wounds, but Folko said: "First take off the head and claws of the bear I killed. I promised my lovely Gabriela the prize of the hunt. Then you may bind up my arm, for it is broken."

Sinram did his bidding. When the trophies of conquest were taken, and the wounded arm splintered, Folko asked to be led back to the castle.

"God knows I dare not look you in the face," said Sintram in a low voice, "I know not even if I dare approach you."

"Truly, you were in a right evil way," answered the baron, gravely, "but if repentance does not avail how can anyone of us hope to stand before God? And it is you who have saved my life, so take comfort and let us go."

With gentle strength Sintram supported the baron by the left arm, and the two moved forward in the moonlight, without more words.

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH

**A**S they approached the castle they heard the sound of wailing, and the chapel was solemnly lighted. Within Gabriela knelt in prayer weeping over Montfaucon's fate.

But how swift was the change when the noble baron, pale indeed and blood-stained, but saved from danger and from death, stood in the entrance to the holy building and called in a low, sweet voice:

"Do not be startled Gabriela, nor fear me; for by the honour of my race I am a living man."

How Gabriela's eyes shone, as with the light of heaven, at the sight! and then they sought the heavens indeed with tears of joy and thankfulness. Supported by two pages, Folko sank upon his knees by her side, and the two solemnized their happiness in silent prayer.

As they left the chapel, the wounded knight leaning upon his fair lady's arm, Sintram was still standing outside in the darkness, his soul black as the night and shy as a night-bird. Trembling, he stepped forward into the circle

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of the lamplight, and laid the bear's head and claws at Gabriela's feet, saying:

"The prize of to-day's hunt, won by the great Baron of Montfaucon for his lady."

The Norsemen broke into a shout of joyous amazement to hear that on his very first trial their noble guest had vanquished the mightiest and grimmest of their mountain foes. Folko smiled, and said, looking round upon the circle:

"You must not laugh at me now if for the present I stay safely at home with my fair wife."

Then those who yesterday had spoken together in the armourer's hall came forward and said with a deep reverence:

"My lord, how could we guess that in the whole world there would be no single achievement in which you would not excel all other knights!"

"You might have had more faith in a pupil of old Sir Hugh's," Folko answered amicably. "But now, my brave Norsemen, you must spare some of your praises for this, my rescuer, who guarded my life from the claws of the she-bear when I leaned against the cliff wounded by my fall."

He pointed to Sintram, and once more the shout of acclaim burst forth, and old Rolf

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bowed his head with tears of thankfulness over his foster-child's hand.

But Sintram shrank away, shuddering: "If you but knew," he said, "whom you see before you, your lances one and all would pierce my heart, and perhaps that would be best, even for me. I make no confession, for I would spare the honour of my father and my race. Yet this much, noble Norsemen, ye shall know—"

"Youth," Folko interrupted him, with a glance of reproof, "your brain is bewildered and your speech wild. Be silent, I charge you, concerning your vain dreams."

For the moment Sintram obeyed him, but as the baron, with a smile, began to move up the castle steps, he cried out:

"Stay, my lord, stay. I will do your bidding in all else that your heart commands, but in this I cannot." He turned to the Norsemen: "This much you shall surely know. I am no longer worthy to dwell under the same roof with the noble wounded hero, Folko of Montfaucon, and his pure, angelic lady, Gabriela. And you, my aged father, good-night and farewell! Think of me no more. I am going to the Steinburg on the Rock of the Moon, and there I will remain until a change comes."

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There was something in his speech which not even Folko dared question or oppose, and Biörn bent his wild head humbly, and said: "Do what seems well to you, my poor son, for I fear you are only too right."

And while Gabriela led the exhausted baron up to rest, Sintram departed in silence from the castle of his fathers, old Rolf following him without a word.

## CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

THROUGH deep, winding valleys, buried in ice and snow, Sintram and his old foster-father travelled to the Rock of the Moon. It was a sorrowful journey. Now and again Rolf would sing a verse or two from some holy hymn with its promise of comfort and peace to the penitent sinner, and Sintram would thank him with a mournful look, but except for this neither spoke a word.

At last, when it was close upon daybreak, Sintram broke the silence with a question: "Tell me, Rolf, who are those two, sitting motionless by the frozen forest brook? One so tall, and one so dwarf-like? Surely, they, too, have been driven forth into the waste by their own wild hearts. Are they known to you, Rolf? For the look of them fills me with fear."

"My lord," answered the old man, "your own troubled mind has bewildered you. There stand yonder a tall pine sapling and a little blighted oak-bush half-hidden with snow and strange to look upon, but no men."

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"Look again, Rolf! Look again more closely! Now they are moving. Now they are whispering together."

"Master, the morning wind stirs the boughs, and sighs among the pine needles and the dead yellow leaves, and ruffles the fallen snow."

"Nay, Rolf, do you not see? Now they are coming towards us. Now they are close at hand."

"Master, it is we who have come nearer to them in our journey, and the sinking moon throws the shadows far out over the valley."

"Good evening!" said a hollow voice. And Sintram became aware of the mad pilgrim, and by his side the Master Dwarf more evil-looking than ever.

"You were right," murmured Rolf, and he shrank away behind his master, making the sign of the cross on forehead and breast.

But Sintram, half-crazed, went up to the two figures.

"I know not," he said, "what is the meaning of this strange desire you have always shown to be my companions. Will you come with me now to the Steinburg? There, you poor pale pilgrim, I will tend and comfort you as I can. And for you," he turned fiercely to the Master Dwarf, "you, my terror

and abhorrence, I will make you shorter by a head in guerdon for yesterday."

"That were a fine feat!" laughed the dwarf.

"And I suppose you think you would do the whole world a great service thereby. And indeed, who knows? It would always be a beginning. Only, my poor boy, *you* are not the man for it."

Meanwhile the pilgrim thoughtfully shook his white head, saying:

"I would willingly come with you, and I believe you would as willingly welcome me, but the time is not yet. Have patience awhile, for I will surely come, though after many days. And first we two must take a journey together to seek your father, and then, my friend, you will know me by my name."

But the Master Dwarf made a threatening gesture towards the pilgrim.

"I dare you to thwart me again," he cried.

The pilgrim lifted his long lean hand and pointed to the rising sun, with the words:

"Hinder me, or yonder sun, if you can!"

And as its first rays touched the snow, the dwarf, shuddering and scolding, leapt away into a dark ravine and vanished. The pilgrim, transfigured in the solemn golden light, peacefully continued his way to a neighbour-



THE DWARF, SHUDDERING AND SCOLDING, LEAPT AWAY INTO A DARK RAVINE



ing castle. From its chapel, not long after, sounded the passing bell.

"In God's name, Sir Sintram," murmured Rolf, "what companions are these of yours? One of them cannot endure the good God's kindly sun. The other has no sooner entered a human dwelling than the plaint of the tidings of death follows upon his footsteps. Is he an assassin?"

"I think not," answered Sintram. "He seems to me the better of the two. But how strangely stubborn he was in his refusal to come with me. Did I not beg him gently enough? He can sing sweetly, I know, and he would have sung me a slumber song. No one has ever sung me a cradle song since my mother went into the cloister."

At the sweet remembrance his eyes grew dim. But he hardly knew what words he had spoken for his mind was wandering and distraught. They reached the Rock of the Moon. They climbed up to the Steinburg. The warden, an old and gloomy man, specially devoted to Sintram on account of his wild ways and sullen melancholy, hastened to lower the drawbridge, and give them silent welcome. In silence Sintram entered and the joyless doors of his hermitage closed with a crash behind him.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH

**A** HERMIT indeed, or something very near it, poor Sintram now became. For as the sacred Christmastide drew near, his ghastly dreams returned upon him, this time with such a mastery of terror that all his retainers and servants fled from the castle in fear, nor dared to return. So he was left alone with Rolf and the old warden.

It is true he was now quiet again, but so pale and still that he might have been taken for some wandering ghost. No words of comfort from his faithful Rolf, no gentle, god-fearing song could avail to help him any more; and the warden with his surly silence, his wild, scarred face, and his bald head heavily marked with a sword cut, seemed like the hapless knight's still darker shadow. Rolf longed to summon the holy chaplain from Drontheim, but how could he leave his young master alone with the gloomy warden, in whose presence he always felt a secret shudder. This man had been for many years in Biörn's service, who prized him for his invincible faith and turbulent bravery. Yet

neither Biörn nor anyone else knew from whence he came, nor who he really was: a strange, grim warrior, whose very name was known to few or none; the less needful this in that he held intercourse with no man. He was simply the warden of the Steinburg on the Rock of the Moon, and that was all. Rolf committed his heart's deep trouble to the good God, believing that He would help. And help came.

For on Christmas Eve the bell of the drawbridge rang, and Rolf, looking from the battlements, saw the chaplain of Drontheim outside. He was in strange company, for by his side stood the mad pilgrim, the dead bones on his dark mantle glimmering ghastly white in the faint starlight. But the presence of the chaplain filled Rolf's heart with such joy, that it left no room for misgiving. "Who comes with him cannot come amiss," he said to himself; and hastened to admit them with all reverence. He was obliged to guide and support the pilgrim up the steps, for he was benumbed with cold. So Rolf led them into the hall, where Sintram sat, white and rigid, under the flickering light of a single lamp.

"I bring you a greeting from your mother," the chaplain said, as he entered; and at the words a smile touched the young knight's

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face, and its deadly pallor quickened to a flush of joy.

“Ah, God!” he murmured, “and does my mother still live, and still care to hear of me?”

“She has a great gift,” answered the chaplain, “even the gift of prophecy; and by its power she has full knowledge of you, and what you will do and what leave undone. For she sees all things truly, in many a marvellous vision, imaged as in a dream. She knows even now of your deep sorrow, and therefore she sends me, who am her convent’s confessor, to comfort you, but at the same time to warn you, for her heart tells her, and I, too, am inclined to believe it, that there still lies before you many a test, strange, hard and perilous.”

Sintram bowed his head over his folded arms, and said, with a gentle smile:

“I have already come through much, more than in my boldest hour I could have dared to hope, ten thousand times more through my mother’s greeting and your encouragement, reverend father, and this after a fall so cruel and so deep. God’s mercy is great, and if a burden of penance and proof be still in His sending, I hope, by His help, to be able to bear it.”

The door opened while Sintram was speak-

ing, and the warden stood in the entrance, the torch he carried throwing a blood-red glow upon his face. He gazed in terror on the mad pilgrim, who had just sunk down helpless on a chair, and whom Rolf upheld and tended; then he turned to the chaplain in amazement, and gasped:

“A strange meeting! Surely the hour of confession and reconciliation is come.”

The priest caught the whispered words.

“I think so, too,” he said, “for this surely seems to be a day of grace and peace. Yonder poor soul, whom I found half frozen on my road, would not suffer me to lead him hither to a fire till he had made his confession. Do you likewise, my dark warrior with your fiery torch, nor let the good moment slip from your resolve.”

The warden made a sign of assent, and together they left the hall, the chaplain turning as he went to bid Rolf and Sintram give all care and comfort to his sick charge.

These did as he desired them, and when at last, thanks to their gentle offices, the pilgrim opened his eyes, the young knight said, with a kindly smile:

“See, you have come to me after all. And yet how earnestly I besought you the other night and you would not come. Perhaps my

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speech was somewhat rough and hasty, and you were afraid?"

A look of sudden terror crossed the pilgrim's face; but he raised his loving eyes to Sintram's, and said humbly:

"Ah, dearest lord, my whole heart is yours. Only I implore you do not speak of those former things which have come to pass between us if you would not distract me with fear. For either I am mad, indeed, and have forgotten it all, or else, my lord, you have met in the forest him who is so like me, even as my mightier twin brother."

Sinram laid a gentle hand upon his lips.

"Speak of it no more," he said, "and I will be silent with all my heart."

And both he and Rolf shuddered, though they knew not why.

After a silence the pilgrim spoke.

"Give me a lute," he said, "and I will sing you a song of sweet comfort."

Rolf found and brought one, and the pilgrim half raised himself in the great chair, and sang this song:

Lo, when Death draws nigh thee,  
Creeping cold through every part,  
Then hie thee,  
Hie thee where doubt shall fly thee,

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Uplift thy face  
To the door of grace,  
And God shall ease thy heart.  
  
See how the east is sparkling !  
Hark to the angels' singing,  
Through crimson sunrise sent !  
Long hast thou wandered, darkling,  
Now for thy help comes winging  
Death, the munificent.  
  
Ah, give him gentle greeting  
And all his terrors cease,  
For he, since Time was fleeting,  
Turns penance into peace.  
  
Thou, when Death draws nigh thee,  
Creeping cold through every part,  
Ah, hie thee,  
Hie thee where doubt shall fly thee,  
Uplift thy face  
To the door of grace,  
And God shall ease thy heart.

“Amen!” said Sintram and Rolf with folded hands, and as the lute’s last chords died solemnly away, the door opened, and the chaplain and warden entered with slow silent steps.

“I bring you a fair Christmas gift,” said the priest, “this precious soul restored after long hard wandering to atonement and peace. Dear pilgrim, and you, Sintram my son, take comfort and renew your trust in God by this ensample.”

At a sign from the chaplain, the warden spoke:

"More than twenty years ago," he began, "I, a bold, careless shepherd, was driving my sheep up to the mountains. Now there followed me a young knight who was called Weigand the Slender. He would fain buy my favourite lamb for his fair lady, and offered me much gold for it in a friendly spirit. But I refused him roughly. Then the hot blood of youth flamed in us both. A blow from his sword hurled me senseless into the abyss."

"Not dead?" said the pilgrim under his breath.

"I am no ghost," was the gruff reply, but on a gesture of reproof from the chaplain he continued more humbly:

"Slowly and in solitude I recovered, thanks to the remedies which abound in our rich mountain valleys, and which my shepherd's life had taught me to know. When I came forth, with my scarred face and my bald head, no man knew me again. I soon heard, from the voice of rumour, how Weigand had been rejected by his fair lady Verena, on account of that murderous deed; how he wasted away for grief, and how she would have ended her days in a cloister, had not her father prevailed upon her to give her

hand in marriage to the great Knight Biörn. Then, when I heard this, a fierce lust of vengeance inflamed my heart, and I denied name and home and kindred, and entered the powerful Biörn's service as an utter stranger, so that Weigand might carry for ever the burden of his crime, while I feasted upon his woe. And so I have, through all these long years that are gone, feasted cruelly upon his self-exile, his comfortless home-coming, his ruined mind. But to-day"—and the hot tears overflowed his eyes—"to-day God has broken my hard heart. Dear Sir Weigand, count yourself no longer a murderer, but grant me your forgiveness, and tell me that you will pray for him who has done you such dreadful hurt. And—" Sobs hindered his speech. He sank down at the pilgrim's feet, who embraced him with tears of joy and pardon.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST

THE exalted rapture of the hour soon passed into a quiet and clear contemplation of real life, and Weigand, now healed, laid aside his pilgrim's mantle with the dead bones, saying:

"I made it my penance to bear about with me these ghastly relics, in the thought that some of them might be his whom I had murdered. I sought them far and near, in the dry beds of deep woodland waters, on high in the nests of eagles and vultures. And in my search it sometimes seemed to me—or was it only an illusion of my bewildered mind?—that I met with one who was very like me, one who might have been my double, and who, though far, far mightier, was even paler and more wasted."

A supplianting sign from Sintram checked this speech, and Weigand turned to him with a smile.

"You know now the whole depth of the inward anguish which tormented me, and your gentle heart can understand the riddle of my fervent love for you and how it was

mingled with fear. For child, how like so-ever you may be to your terrible father, yet you have your mother's tender heart, and some faint reflection of her illumines your pale face, however stern its look, even as the joyous flush of sunrise falls upon a lonely glacier or a snow-bound valley. And alas, my poor child, how long you have been alone, solitary at heart amid crowded throngs, far, far from your mother's sight. Ah Sin-tram, dear to my soul."

Sintram said:

"I am tasting a spring of sweet waters in a barren waste. Ah, if you could only stay with me to be my help and salvation, and we would mingle our tears. But I have a foreboding that I am soon to lose you."

"Yes," the pilgrim answered, "I believe that the song I sang so lately was almost my last, and that it was a prophecy of my own end. But what a thirsty and unsatisfied land is the soul of man! God's grace overflows us, and still we ask for more. So I who am near my end, I hope not unblessed, have still one deep desire. I know it cannot be granted me," he added in a faltering voice, "for I am alto-gether unworthy of so great a gift."

"It shall be granted," the chaplain said in quick, joyful tones. "He that humbleth him-

self shall be exalted, and the heart which is now cleansed from all stain of murder may surely once behold Verena's holy countenance, for pardon and farewell."

The pilgrim raised his hands on high in silent thanksgiving. His tears fell, and his face was radiant. But Sintram's eyes were upon the ground, and he sighed sadly to himself:

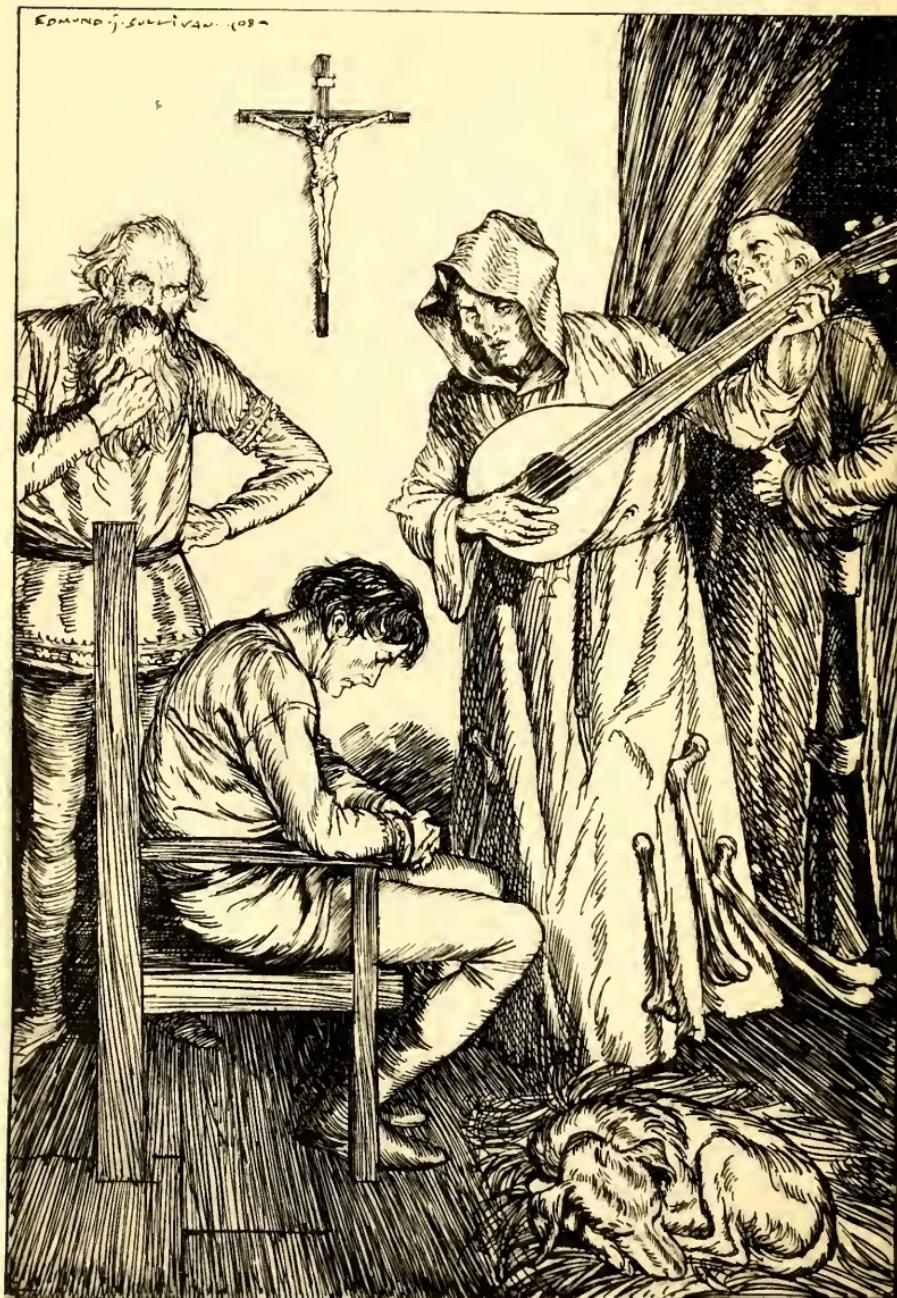
"Alas! if only I too—"

"Not yet, my poor Sintram," said the priest very kindly, for he had caught the whispered words; "the time is not yet come. The evil powers within you must once again uplift their hungry heads, and Verena must restrain her longing and yours till all is pure in your heart even as in hers. Yet take comfort, for God is graciously inclined towards you, and the longed-for joy will come, if not here, yet surely hereafter."

Then the pilgrim seemed to awake out of a trance. He rose up, his frailty gone, and said: "Father, let us go forth, and watch at the cloister gates until the sun is in the heavens, I myself close, close to the heaven of my desire."

In vain Rolf and the chaplain pleaded his exhaustion. He made light of it, girded himself for departure and begged for the lute





"WAIT A MOMENT," HE SAID, "WHILE I SING THIS CHILD A SLUMBER-SONG"

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as his travelling companion. His resolute bearing overcame their opposition almost without words, and the chaplain made himself ready for the journey. But the pilgrim's eyes fell upon Sintram, who had sunk back upon his couch in a strange exhaustion, half asleep.

"Wait a moment," he said, deeply moved, "while I sing this child a slumber song."

Sintram seemed to smile an assent, and the pilgrim's light touch once more swept the strings, and he sang:

Now slumber, child, and rest thee,  
Nor dream of pain and wrong;  
Thy mother's love has sent thee  
The gracious gift of song.  
Her prayers are ever round thee  
In holy silence here,  
Ah, could her touch surround thee!  
Ah, could she but draw near!

And when the dawn shall wake thee  
To life, and light, and noise,  
In all thy deeds betake thee  
To this her counsel's voice;  
Hark to its gentle guiding,  
To urge thee or withhold,  
Thy foot shall feel no sliding,  
Thy heart with peace be bold.

And should'st thou listen truly  
And guide thy steps aright,  
Then tranquil joy shall sue thee  
As in her gentle sight.

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A gracious wind of blessing  
Shall fan thy face and hair  
With comfort and caressing,  
Thy mother's love and care.

Oh sweet and strong refreshment!  
Oh sacred light of life!  
Saving from hell's enmeshment,  
Lifting from sin and strife.  
Then slumber, child, and rest thee,  
Forgetting pain and wrong;  
Thy mother's love has sent thee  
This gracious gift of song.

When the music ceased, Sintram had fallen into a deep, untroubled sleep. Rolf and the warden remained by his bedside, whilst the two travellers passed out into the quiet starlight.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND

**I**T was close upon daybreak, and Rolf was nodding drowsily, when he was awakened by a sound of soft singing; and on looking round to see from whence it came, he saw to his astonishment that it was the warden who sang. He, noticing the old man's amazement, said:

“So sings Sir Weigand even now at the cloister gates, and they are opened to him in welcome.”

Upon which Rolf fell asleep again, uncertain whether he had been dreaming or awake. But later, when he woke in the broad sunlight, he saw the warden’s face marvellously transfigured in the roseate morning glow, the once harsh features softened to a childlike gentleness. And he saw how this strange man seemed to listen in the still morning air, as it might be to some rare discourse or splendid music. And when Rolf was about to speak, he signed entreatingly for silence, and still listened intent and motionless.

At last with a slow, satisfied movement he sank back in his seat, murmuring:

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"Thank God, she has granted his last request. He will be buried in the graveyard of the cloister, and now he has forgiven me from the depths of his heart. Ah, truly, his end is sweet."

Rolf did not dare to speak nor to awaken his master. He felt that he was listening to a spirit already departed.

For a long time the warden was silent, smiling happily to himself. Then he raised himself a little, listened once more, and said:

"It is over. The bells ring sweetly for us who have overcome. Ah! how safe and easy the good God makes it."

And so it was. He fell back again, wearily, the soul set free from that harsh and troubled body.

Rolf gently wakened his young master, and pointed to the dead man who still smiled. Sintram smiled too, and he and his faithful servant knelt down together, and prayed to God for the departed soul. Then they rose up, carried the cold body into the vault, and watched beside it with consecrated candles, waiting for the chaplain's return. The pilgrim, they well knew, would return no more.

Towards midday the chaplain came back, alone. He could but confirm what they already knew. But he brought a message of





HOW THIS SAME WEIGAND HAD FALLEN ASLEEP LIKE A TIRED CHILD

hope and comfort to Sintram from his mother, and told them how this same Weigand had fallen asleep like a tired child, Verena, calm and loving, holding the crucifix before his closing eyes.

“So God shall ease thy heart,” sang Sintram softly to himself, and they made ready the warden’s last resting-place, and lowered him into it with all due and solemn rites. Immediately afterwards the chaplain was obliged to depart, but he was able to say to Sintram, as he bade him an affectionate farewell:

“Now that you have become so gentle and quiet and devout, be sure your beloved mother knows it.”

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD

**M**EANWHILE, in Biörn's castle, Christmas Eve was being celebrated in a somewhat less fair and holy fashion. Yet there, too, the will of God was made manifest.

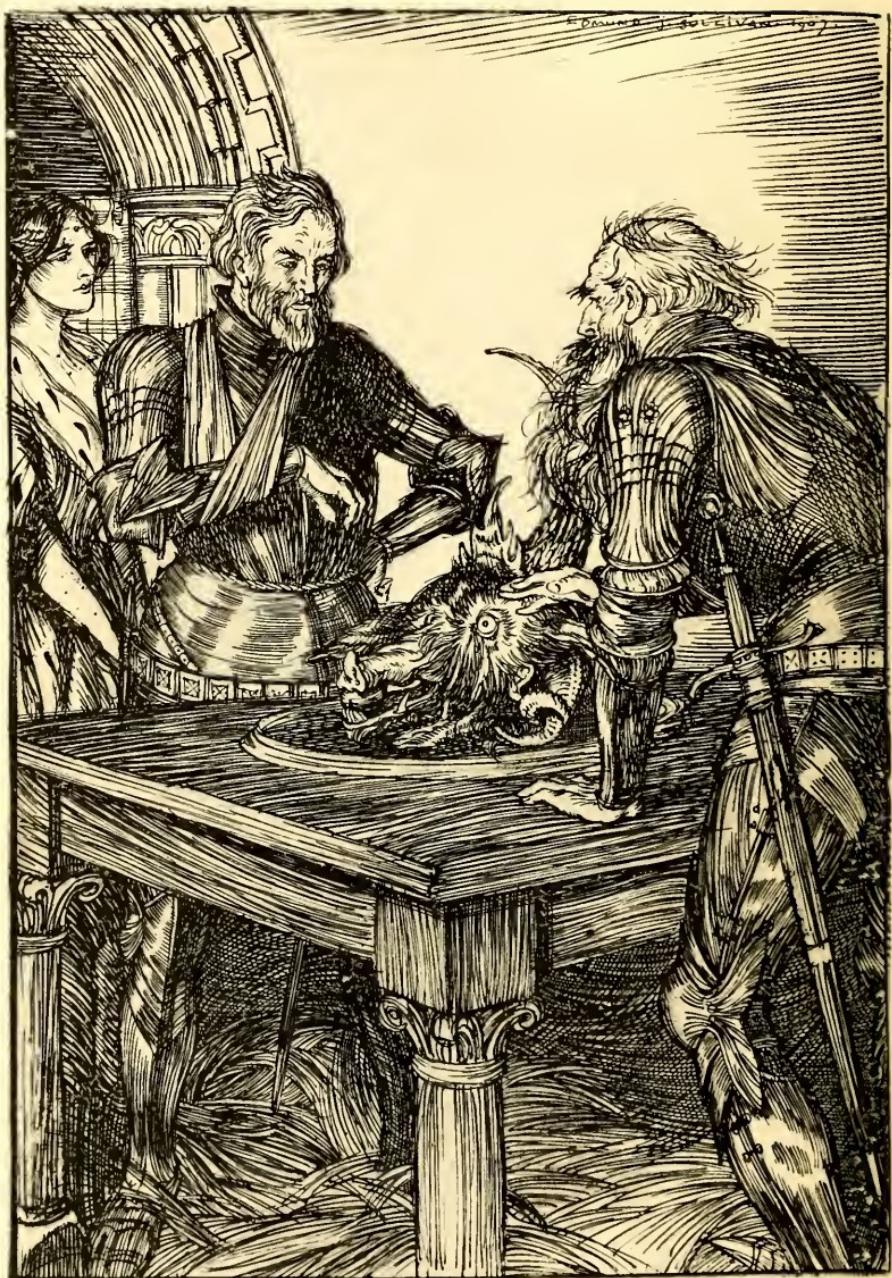
At the request of the lord of the castle, Folko had suffered himself to be led down into the hall by Gabriela; and there, round the stone table, the three now sat, a rich feast spread before them, while down the length of the room on both sides the followers of the two knights dined together at great tables; in full armour, for such was the Norse custom. The lofty chamber was dazzlingly lighted with many a lamp and candle.

The deeper night was drawing near, and Gabriela warned her wounded lord that it was time to withdraw. But Biörn, who caught the whisper, said:

“You are right, fair lady. Our hero needs rest. But first let us make known to him an old and honoured custom of this house.”

He gave a sign, and four servants entered, solemnly carrying an enormous boar's image,





"THIS IS FREYA'S BOAR, AND WE WILL SWEAR VOWS THEREBY"

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made seemingly out of pure gold. This they placed in the centre of the stone table, and all Biörn's followers reverently rose up and doffed their helmets, while the lord of the castle himself did the same.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Folko, very gravely.

Biörn answered:

"So have my forefathers and yours done at every yule feast from time immemorial. This is Freya's boar, and we will swear vows thereby and let a loving cup go round."

"What our ancestors called the yule feast," said Folko, "we do not celebrate. We are good Christians, and keep the holy Christmastide."

"Let us do the one and not leave the other undone." It was Biörn who spoke. "I hold my ancestors too dear to neglect their noble customs. Who thinks otherwise let him do according to his own wisdom, but that shall not hinder me. By this golden boar I swear—" He was just stretching out his hand to lay it solemnly upon the image.

But Folko of Montfaucon cried:

"Hold! in our Saviour's holy name! While I have breath and will, none shall keep the wild customs of heathendom unhindered."

Biörn of the Flaming Eyes looked wrath-

fully upon him, and with an ominous sound of clanking armour, the followers of the two lords fell asunder, and ranged themselves in two companies, each behind its leader, while here and there helm and casque were buckled fast.

"Bethink what you are doing," said Biörn. "I was about to vow eternal faith and grateful allegiance to the house of Montfaucon. But if you disturb or hinder me in these my ancestral rites, then look to yourself and to all whom you hold dear. My wrath will know no bounds."

Gabriela had turned very pale, and Folko signed to her to step behind his men, saying:

"Courage and comfort, noble lady. Many a weaker Christian has ventured more for God and for the holy Church than seems to threaten here. Trust me, the Baron of Montfaucon is not so easily crushed."

Gabriela drew back at Folko's command, reassured in some measure by his undaunted smile; but Biörn's fury only raged higher at this proof of his enemy's confidence. Once again he stretched out his hand to the boar's image, and a fearful oath seemed trembling on his lips, but the baron snatched an iron glove belonging to Biörn from the table, and with his sound arm, his left, he dealt the

golden idol such a mighty blow that it fell crashing to the ground, sundered in two halves. Biörn and his men stood as though turned into stone.

But not for long. Mailed hands were stretched for sword and shield, and an angry, threatening murmur ran through the hall. At a sign from Folko, one of his followers reached him a battle-axe. This he swung powerfully on high in his left hand, and standing in the middle of the hall, calm and stern as an avenging angel, spoke these words above the tumult.

“What would ye, deluded Norsemen? and you, this castle’s godless lord? Surely ye are become heathen. Then, as heathen ye shall learn that my God has not put the power and vigour of conquest in my right arm alone. Yet first hear me if ye still have hearts to hear. Upon this same accursed image, now by God’s grace shattered, did you, Biörn, lay your hand when you swore that vow of destruction against the men of the harbour towns if any of them should fall into your power. And they came. Gotthard Lenz came, and Rudlieb, cast by the storm upon your coast. What then, O! maker of wild vows? What did your oath avail you against them, you or your followers, at that yule feast? Try

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your fate with me. The Lord will be with me now, as once with those good men." He turned to his warriors. "Quick, to arms! Gotthard and Rudlieb be our battle cry!" But Biörn's drawn sword sank down. There was silence through the Norse ranks, and not a look was lifted from the ground. Then one and another began quietly to steal away, until at last Biörn was left alone, face to face with the baron and his men. He hardly seemed to notice his deserted state. Sinking upon his knees, he laid his shining sword low on the ground beside him, pointed to the shattered image, and said:

"Make me even so. I deserve no better. Yet one thing I pray, only one. Do not shame me, O great baron, by seeking hospitality elsewhere in Norway."

Folko thought for a moment.

"I fear you not," he said at last, "and as far as may be, I freely forgive you."

And with that he made the sign of the cross over Biörn, and so suffered Gabriela to lead him to his chamber. The men of the House of Montfaucon followed in proud silence.

And now Biörn's wild, fierce heart was utterly broken. In still deeper humility he waited upon the slightest wish of Folko or Gabriela. But his guests withdrew more and more into

the peaceful seclusion of their own rooms, where, in the midst of the ice-bound northern winter, they made a joyous summer-time of their own. The baron's wounded state did not hinder their merry evenings, full of the magic of song and string music and gay romance. Rather it added one more picture to the gracious series; the picture of a tall, handsome knight leaning upon his slender lady's arm, as it might be in a glad exchange of office, and with her wandering through the brightly-lighted rooms, scattering gentle greetings like flowers as they went.

All this time no one spoke of poor Sintram. Since his father's last wild outbreak, Gabriela had recalled the youth's passionate self-accusation with still deeper dread; and though Folko never broke his silence concerning it, this only strengthened her suspicion of some fearful mystery. Even the baron himself often felt a secret shudder when he thought of the youth's white face circled in its dark locks. No one knew what he was doing in the ill-famed Steinburg on the Rock of the Moon. No one could say whether his remorse had deepened to cold, numb despair. Strange rumours came from the servants who had deserted him, how the Evil Spirit had taken possession of Sintram altogether, so that

none dared remain near him, and how the sullen, mysterious warden had just paid for his fidelity with his life. Folko could hardly repel the fearful suspicion that Sintram was irrevocably in league with the powers of evil. And surely evil spirits did haunt the exiled knight, although not at his bidding. Often in his dreams he would see Venus, the wicked enchantress, floating above the battlements of the Steinburg in a golden car drawn by winged cats. Then she would laugh down to him:

“Foolish Sintram! Foolish Sintram! If only you had followed the Master Dwarf you would be lying now in Helen’s arms, and the Rock of the Moon would be the Rock of Love, and the Steinburg the Castle of Roses. But your white face and dark hair would have fallen away from you (they are only a disguise) and in their place you would have the semblance of the Knight Paris, the wonder of the world, his bright cheeks and golden hair and shining eyes. Ah, how Helen would love you!”

And then by her art he saw himself in a cloudy mirror, a glorious hero kneeling at Gabriela’s feet; and she blushed like the dawn and sank into his arms.

Now when he awoke from such visions of

the night, his only help lay in the sword and scarf his lady once had given him; and he would grasp them in an anguish of haste as a castaway lays hold upon the plank that may save him; and he would weep bitterly over them, and whisper softly to himself:

“Can it be true that one hour, one single hour in my miserable life was safe and sinless?”

Once, towards midnight, he sprang up from dreams such as these, but this time with an overwhelming terror. For, as she finished speaking, the fair enticing features of Venus the enchantress became distorted by the intense scorn with which she looked down upon him, distorted and transformed into a malignant likeness of the Master Dwarf.

Sinram sprang up, and to quiet his distracted spirit, he put on Gabriela’s sword and scarf, and hastened out under the solemn dome of the starlit, wintry heavens. There, on the high castle rampart, he paced up and down, deep in thought, between the leafless oaks and the snow-laden pine trees.

Now, as he paced, a melancholy wailing sound rose up to him from the walled moat, a sound that strove to become a song, but could not for inward fear.

“Who is there?” Sinram called, and all was

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silent. But as he resumed his walk the sound began again, this time with a rattling and moaning, as if from a dying breast.

Sintram overcame the horror which seemed to hold him by the hair, and silently began to make his way downwards into the dry, rock-hewn moat. He was soon so far down that he lost sight of the stars, and discovered in the deep shadow below him a shrouded form dimly moving to and fro. Slipping involuntarily down the remainder of the steep descent, he was close upon it ere he was aware. Instantly the moaning and wailing gave place to wild maniacal laughter, while the figure's loose voluminous draperies shook and shivered.

"Oho ! Oho ! my comrade ! That was rather too quick for you. Well, so it often happens, and now you see, my brave, pious youth, you stand no higher than I, so you must make the best of it!"

"What do you want of me, with your laughing, with your weeping?"

They were Sintram's imperious words.

"I might ask the same of you," came the mysterious answer, "and you might find it harder to tell me. Miserable man ! What of *your* laughing ? What of *your* weeping ? But now stand back a moment, and I will show

you something very interesting and quite unknown to you in your stone fortress."

And the dark shape scratched and fingered at the stone, until a little iron door opened, leading down into the unfathomable depths of the mountain.

"Will you follow me?" came the strange whisper. "This leads straight to your father's castle. In half an hour we shall come up through the floor in your fair lady's sleeping chamber. The Duke Menelaus will lie in a magic slumber, leave that to me, while you hasten back hither with that lovely slender form in your arms. And so what you lost by your folly will be yours once more."

As Sintram listened a great trembling came upon him, and he was torn asunder by love's desire and anguish of conscience. But at last, pressing sword and scarf to his breast, he cried: "Let all the joys of life be lost, I hold fast to that one safe and sinless hour!"

"Safe and sinless hour indeed," came the malignant echo laughing back out of the darkness. "Do you not know who it was you conquered? A good old friend who only pretended to be your enemy that you might glory in his overthrow. Will you be convinced? Look then!"

And the dark wrappings fell back, and Sin-

tram saw the small, dwarfish warrior in the strange armour, with the golden horns on his helmet, and the sickle-shaped halberd in his hand, the same whom Sintram thought he had slain on Niflung's Heath. There he stood, and laughed.

"You see, my boy," he said, "in the whole wide world there is naught but fading dream and fleeting foam. Then take the comfort of the dream, sip the foam while you may. Forward into the darkness! It will lead you to love and life, to heavenly Helen. But first would you like to see your friend a little nearer?"

The visor flew up, and the devilish features of the Master Dwarf revealed themselves to the knight's gaze.

He spoke, as though in a dream.

"And Venus the enchantress, is there something of her about you, too?"

The dwarf laughed.

"Just a little," he said, "only it is rather she who has something of me about her. But if you will submit and let yourself be enchanted and changed to the fair Prince Paris, then, O! Prince Paris," and his voice melted to an alluring song, "then, O! Prince Paris, shall I, too, be fair like you."

At that moment a light shone upon them from

above. It was old Rolf, who had missed his young master and come in search of him, a consecrated taper in his hand, which now threw its glimmer downwards into the moat. "In God's name, Sir Sintram," he called out; "What is the ghost of the strange warrior doing in your company, him whom you killed on Niflung's Heath, and whom I was never able to bury?"

"Do you see? Do you hear?" whispered the Master Dwarf, and he drew back into the shadow of the subterranean passage. "That wise old fellow up there knows me right well. Your prowess was of no avail, so now pluck boldly of the joy of life."

But with a mighty effort, Sintram sprang back into the circle of light thrown downward from above, and called in a threatening voice:

"Depart from me, unquiet spirit. I bear a name in my heart wherein you have no share." And in fear and rage the Master Dwarf turned and fled into the mountain, shutting the iron door behind him with a crash. Within they could hear the moaning and wailing recommence.

But Sintram climbed up to where Rolf stood. He signed to his old servant to be silent, and his only words were:

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“One of the best of my joys, nay, my only joy has been taken from me, but God helping, I am not yet lost.”

In the dim light of approaching dawn, he and Rolf walled up the door to the fatal passage with great square stones.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH

THE long northern winter was over at last, and the woods and valleys clothed themselves in joyous green. The streams sparkled in the sunshine; even the cold grey crags were softened by patches of tender grass, and the snow had melted from all but the highest mountain peaks. On the sunlit waters of the bay Folko's ship was rocking, ready to sail.

The baron was now quite recovered from his hurt, strong and vigorous as though he had never suffered, and one morning he and his fair lady stood together on the shore to watch the packing of their baggage and lading of the ship; and their hearts were glad at the thought of home.

Then from the midst of the crowd of tumultuous voices they caught these words:

“This Norway is a queer place, but the strangest thing in it, and the most terrible, is the Steinburg on the Rock of the Moon. I have never been within its walls, but when in our hunting I caught sight of it towering

up above the encircling pine-woods, I felt a sore weight on my heart as though something unearthly must dwell therein. And a few weeks since, while the snow still lay deep in the valleys, I found myself unexpectedly close upon this strange dwelling-place. There, in the fading twilight, I saw the young Knight Sintram, walking upon the walls like the solitary ghost of some departed hero. He had a lute in his hands, and touched the strings, oh so softly and most woefully, and sighed heavily the while from his very soul."

The rest of the speech was drowned in the universal clamour, and the speaker moved away towards the ship carrying his bale, so that Folko and Gabriela heard no more. Gabriela's lovely eyes were full of tears as she looked at Folko and murmured:

"Does not the lonely Rock of the Moon lie yonder behind that mountain top? Alas, poor Sintram! My heart aches at the thought of him."

"I read the wish of your gentle pitying soul, oh purest and sweetest of women!" Folko answered; and he immediately called for his fleet-footed white Barbary steed, committed to his followers the care of their noble lady, and followed by her smile of gratitude, sprang

It was even as Montfaucon's servant had said. Sintram was sitting on a stone bench not far from the drawbridge, and he mournfully touched his lute while his slow tears fell on the golden strings. Now as he sat there, what seemed like the shadow of a cloud floated past him overhead. He looked up, thinking it might be a flight of homeward-bound cranes, but the heavens were empty, blue and clear. He was still wondering what it might have been, when he saw a movement from the armoury in the tower above him, and a great javelin fell at his feet.

"Hold it fast! Use it well! Your foe is near. Near is the vanishing of your earthly joy."

He heard the words distinctly whispered in his ear, and he seemed to see the shadow of the Master Dwarf slip past him and vanish in a crevice of the moat.

At the same moment he saw a gigantic emaciated figure glide across the valley, a figure like the dead pilgrim only far, far taller. This lifted its long lean arm on high, shook it with an awful threatening gesture, and sank down into an ancient Hun's sepulchre.

Just at that instant Folko of Montfaucon rode up the Rock of the Moon swift as the wind. Something he must have seen of these strange apparitions, for he turned pale, and drawing rein close to Sintram, spoke low and earnestly:

"Who were the two, sir knight, who spoke with you even now?"

"The good God knows," answered Sintram.

"I know them not."

"Ah, if the good God but knew!" cried Montfaucon, "I fear He knows but little of you and of your doings."

"You speak hard and cruel words," Sintram said, "but since that fatal evening, and even long before it, there is nothing I must not bear from you. Dear sir, believe me, for I speak the truth, I know nothing of these terrible comrades. I call them not. I know not what hideous curse binds them to my steps. And yet I trust that God has not forgotten me, even as a true shepherd forgets not the worst and wildest of his lambs, that has strayed far from the fold, and now cries to Him in the dark desert with a voice of pain."

Then at last the great baron's anger wholly melted. Two bright tears stood in his eyes.

"No, surely," he said, "God has not for-

gotten you. See to it that you forget not the good God. And I did not come to upbraid you. I came to bless you in Gabriela's name and mine. God keep you. God restrain you. God uplift you. And Sintram, I shall watch you still from the far shores of Normandy, and learn how you prosper in your struggle with the evil which haunts your poor life. And when you have at last shaken it off, and stand up strong and free, death and hell beneath your feet, then, who knows, I may send you a pledge of love and recompense, fairer than you or I may now conceive."

The baron spoke as a prophet might, scarce conscious of what meaning inspired his words. With a kindly greeting, he turned his noble Arab's head, and galloped swiftly down the valley to the shore.

"Fool! Fool! Thrice fool!" muttered the Master Dwarf's angry voice in Sintram's ear. But from the castle came Rolf's morning hymn, clear and loud, and Sintram heard the closing verse.

Let him contemn  
The joys of men,  
Nor let the vain world bend him;  
So God shall fill  
His heart and will,  
And angel ranks attend him.

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And in Sintram's heart lay a deep and holy happiness, and his eyes shone even more joyfully than in that hour when Gabriela had girded him with scarf and sword, and Folko had dubbed him knight.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH

THE spring breezes blew favourably. The Baron and his fair lady were already far on the open sea, nay, they could see the coast of Normandy on the horizon, and Biörn of the Flaming Eyes still sat grim and taciturn in his castle. He had taken no farewell, and in his soul, in place of loving reverence towards Montfaucon, he nourished a fierce resentment. Fiercer since the incident of the golden boar; and the thought gnawed bitterly into his proud heart that the great baron, flower and pride of his whole race, had come to visit him in joy, and had now departed ill-pleased, in stern condemning gravity. He brooded upon it continually, pressing it like a thorn into his soul, how it had all come about, and how differently things might have happened, and he heard in imagination the songs that would be sung in after days, concerning this journey of the mighty Folko, and the unworthiness of his host the wild Biörn.

Then at last in sullen fury he rent the dark fetters of his mind, and breaking out of the

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castle with all his followers began a feud, the most fearful and unrighteous that he had ever fought. Sintram heard his father's battle blast, and committing the Steinburg to old Rolf's care, armed himself and hastened forth.

But he soon saw the flames rising from mountain farms and dwellings, and read in writing of fire what kind of war it was his father made. Yet he turned not back, but went forward to offer his mediation, swearing that in such an evil cause his noble sword should never be drawn, no, not even if the Steinburg should fall and his father's castle, too, before the foe's revenge. Biörn held a spear in his hand, and he hurled it in mad fury against his son. The weapon of death flew past, but Sintram moved not, lifted no hand in his own defence, nor closed his visor, but said:

“Do your worst, father. In your godless war I will take no part.”

Biörn of the Flaming Eyes smiled scornfully.

“It seems I am never to be without a keeper. My own son relieves the fine French knight.”

But he soon came to himself, accepted Sintram's mediation, recompensed the hurt he had done, and grimly returned home. Sintram went back to the Rock of the Moon.



"DO YOUR WORST, FATHER; IN YOUR GODLESS WAR I WILL TAKE NO PART"



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This outbreak was only one among many, and it soon came to pass that Sintram was looked upon as the protector of those whom Biörn's fury persecuted. But now and again his own wild nature broke loose, and he took part with his father in dreadful deeds. Then Biörn would laugh in grim delight, saying:

"See, my boy, what a fine flame we have kindled from these farms! how the blood from the dead reddens our blades! It gladdens my heart to see that when you choose you can still be my own dear son!"

After such unruly transgressions Sintram could find no better comfort than to hasten to the chaplain of Drontheim and make confession of his misery and his guilt. Then, after due penance and contrition, the priest would absolve him and raise up his broken spirit. But he often said:

"How nearly, oh how nearly had you attained to the supreme test, how close you were to victory and full atonement and the vision of Verena's face. But now you have undone the work of years. Consider, my son, the life of man passes away, and if you slip backwards again and again, how will you ever gain the summit before you die?"

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So year after year passed by, and Biörn's head was white as snow, and the youth Sintram was young no longer. Rolf was now so old and grey that he was scarcely able to leave the Steinburg, and he would sometimes say: "My life is become a sore burden to me, but also in a sense a comfort, for I believe that the good God still keeps me here for the sake of some wonderful joy that is yet to come. And that must surely concern you, Sintram, my beloved knight and lord, for how could anything else in the world bring me joy?"

Yet all things continued unchanged, and Sintram's terrible dreams of Christmastide lost none of their terror, but grew more and more ghastly.

The Holy Season was drawing nigh once more, and the knight's tormented spirit was filled with a peculiar dread. Sometimes, when he counted the days that lay between, a cold sweat would bathe his forehead, and he would say:

"Keep good watch this time, dear old foster-father, for something awful and decisive lies before me."

One evening he felt an overmastering apprehension concerning his father, and was irresistibly drawn homewards by the con-

viction that some dreadful scene was there being enacted. In vain Rolf reminded him that the snow lay many fathoms deep in the valleys; in vain he even ventured to hint that Sintram's ghastly dreams might come upon him in the mountain, by night, and alone.

"To go cannot be worse than to stay," the knight answered, led his horse out of the stable, and rode away into the deepening darkness.

The gallant steed slipped and stumbled and fell in the pathless ways, but Sintram always pulled him up again, and urged him on in ever wilder and more fearful haste towards the goal of his longing and his dread. Still, he would hardly have reached it had not his faithful hunting dog, Stovmaerke, been with him, to seek out his beloved master's obliterated path, urge him towards it with joyful barks, and warn him with expressive whinings when he was near to a precipice or a treacherous slope of ice under the snow. So, towards midnight, they came to the castle. The windows of the hall were richly lighted as though for the celebration of some splendid feast, and a sound as of muffled singing droned out into the night. Sintram hastily gave his steed to an attendant in the castle

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court, and ran up the steps, Stovmaerke remaining with his friend, the horse. As the knight entered the castle a faithful man at arms came to meet him, saying:

“Thank God, dear master, you are come, for surely mischief is brewing in there. Be on your guard, and do not let yourself be fooled. Your father has a guest, and, as I take it, a right wicked one.”

Shuddering, Sintram opened the door. A little man was seated with his back towards him, a little man in miner's dress and hood. The upright suits of armour encircled the stone table as of old, leaving but the two vacant places. Biörn of the Flaming Eyes sat in the one facing the door, and his wild face and flashing looks, illumined by the dazzling light of the candles, fully justified his grim title.

“Who is that with you, father?” cried Sintram, and his suspicion soon became a certainty, as the miner turned his head, and the Master Dwarf's detested features laughed out of the dark disguise.

“See now, my noble son,” said Biörn, in wild, disordered speech, “you have denied me your company so long that to-night, in my solitude, this jolly companion has come to visit me, and you have lost your seat. But throw aside one of the suits of armour, and

push up a chair in its place, and drink with us, and make merry with us."

"Do, do, Sir Sintram," laughed the Master Dwarf. "What harm can come of it, unless it be that the discarded armour may rattle somewhat strangely in its fall, or at the worst the wandering ghost to whom it once belonged may peer at you over your shoulder? But what matter? The poor ghost cannot drink our wine. Come! Set to!"

Biörn joined clamorously in the stranger's hideous mirth, but Sintram called up the whole strength of his mind lest he should go mad with this wild talk, and gazed steadfastly into the face of the Master Dwarf.

"Why do you stare at him so?" cried his father. "Do you imagine you are looking into a mirror? Now you are together I don't notice it so much, but before you came it seemed to me you were so alike that you might have been mistaken for one another."

"God forbid!" said Sintram, took a step nearer to the dread apparition, and spoke: "Detested stranger, I command you to depart from this castle, in my power as son of the house, as consecrated knight, and as a living soul."

Biörn seemed ready to set his whole will

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against this in angry opposition, and the dwarf muttered to himself:

"*You* are not master here my godly knight.  
You have kindled no fire on this hearth."

But Sintram unsheathed the sword which Gabriela had given him, held the hilt straight before the eyes of this hated guest, and said in calm but powerful tones:

"Flee, or die!"

And he fled, this strange horror, swift as lightning, so that none could see which way he went, whether by window or door. He threw down some of the suits of armour in his passage, the candles went out, and in the livid unearthly light which illumined the hall, it seemed as if his former words were fulfilled, as if the ghostly inhabitants of the suits of mail were indeed present, bent shuddering over the table.

A great horror fell upon both father and son, but they sought not the same way of salvation from it. Biörn set his will that the hateful guest should return, and immediately the Master Dwarf's foot sounded upon the stone steps, and his brown hand was fumbling at the doorlock.

"Now," breathed Sintram to himself, "we are indeed lost if he return. We are lost to all eternity if he return!" And he sank upon



"FLEE, OR DIE!"



his knees, and prayed right out of the anguish of his heart to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and the step was gone from the door. And again Biörn called him back, and again Sintram prayed unceasingly. So the awful struggle of spirit against spirit continued through the long night, while the winter winds howled around the castle, and all the household trembled and looked for the end of the world.

At last a gleam of morning shone through the hall windows. The tumult of the storm ceased, and Biörn sank back in his chair in a swooning slumber. Hope and peace stole into all hearts, and Sintram, pale and spent, went to the castle gate to breath the dew-laden air of the mild winter daybreak.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH

**O**N a stone seat in the wall Sintram rested half asleep. His faithful Stov-maerke had followed him with joyful caresses, and now lay at his master's feet, watchful and alert. All at once he pricked up his ears, his eyes brightened and he bounded joyfully down the mountain slope. Not long after, the chaplain of Drontheim was seen coming out from among the rocks. The dog was his companion, now leaping upon him in friendly greeting, and now running back to his master as though to bring him the welcome tidings.

Sintram opened his eyes like a child who wakes to find Christmas gifts beside his bed. For the chaplain smiled upon him as he had never smiled before. There was victory and blessing, or the joyful promise of them, in his look.

"This night you have done well, very well," said the holy man, and he folded his hands while his eyes overflowed. "I give God thanks for you, my hero and my knight. Verena knows all, and she, too, gives God

thanks for your sake. Now I almost dare hope that the hour is drawing near when you may see her face. But Sintram, Knight Sintram, time presses; for he who is within these walls needs help urgently, and for his sake a hard test still lies before you, the hardest and I hope the last. Arm yourself then, my hero, arm yourself with your bodily armour, for though the weapons of this warfare must be spiritual only, yet is it fitting for a knight even as for a monk, that he should wear at such decisive moments the whole solemn panoply of his calling. Then, if it please you, we will go together to Drontheim. For according to the secret counsel which reveals itself through Verena's glimmering presentiments, this very night you must make the return journey hither. So to-day you will be in sore need of quiet and meditation not to be found in this wild and hostile house."

Sintram bowed his head in glad yet humble assent, and called for his horse and armour.

"Only," he added, "see that you bring none of the suits of mail that were thrown down in the great hall last night."

His commands were quickly obeyed.

The suit of armour which they brought was beautifully decorated with engraved work, the helmet plain, shaped rather like a squire's

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than a knight's, the lance long and powerful. The chaplain gazed upon it in deep thought and with a melancholy emotion. At last, when Sintram with the help of his servants was all but ready, the priest spoke:

"Wondrous providence of God!" he said. "Look, dear sir, this armour and this spear were once borne by Weigand the Slender, who did with them many great deeds. Now when he was tended by your mother in the castle, and your father, too, was very kind to him, he begged as a favour that he might be allowed to hang his armour and his lance in Biörn's armoury (he himself intending, as you well know, to build a cloister and enter it as a monk), and he added his old squire's helmet instead of any other, because this was the one he still wore when he first saw Verena's fair angelic face. How strange is it that now, for this supreme hour of your life, these long unused weapons should be brought forth. To me at least, to my poor human sight, it seems a sign of most grave and yet glorious import."

Sintram now stood fully armed, solemn and splendid to look upon, and he might almost have been taken for a youth in stature and activity, only his face looked out from the visor, old in suffering and experience.

"Who has crowned the charger with leaves?" he inquired angrily of the attendants. "I am no conqueror, nor yet a bridegroom. And what strange crown is this, with its red and yellow rustling oak leaves, withered and dead as the season's self?"

"My lord," a servant answered, "It came over me that this must be done, I myself know not why."

"Let him alone," said the chaplain. "This, too, seems to me a manifest sign from the true source."

The knight swung himself into the saddle; the priest walked beside him, and the two journeyed slowly and in silence to Drontheim. The faithful dog followed close behind his master.

As they came in sight of the great castle of Drontheim, a sweet smile rested upon Sintram's face, like sunshine over a wintry valley.

"God does great things in me," he said. "Long ago, a wild, unruly boy, I rushed away from here. Now I come back a repentant man. I hope it may yet be well with this poor troubled life."

The chaplain nodded a loving assent, and soon the travellers passed together through the great echoing vaulted gateway of the

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castle court. At the chaplain's call, servants hastened respectfully forward to take charge of the horse, while himself and Sintram passed through many a winding stair and passage, till they reached the far-away little room which the priest had chosen for his habitation, far from the tumult of men, near to the clouds and the stars. There they passed a peaceful day in heartfelt prayer and earnest reading of the Holy Book.

As evening fell the chaplain rose and said: "Come, my knight, now saddle your horse, and mount, and ride back to your father's castle. You have a painful path before you, and I may not be your companion. But I can call upon the Lord for you, and that will I, throughout all this long and dreadful night. Oh, priceless vessel of the Most High, do not let yourself be lost!"

Shuddering with fearful forebodings, yet strong and glad at heart, Sintram did the holy man's bidding. The sun was just sinking below the horizon, as the knight drew near to a long valley curiously shut in by rocks, through which his way lay homeward to his father's castle.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH

THE knight was close upon the ravine when he turned, his heart full of prayer and thankfulness, to take one last look at the Castle of Drontheim. It lay behind him, silent and massive and peaceful, the window panes of the chaplain's little room in the roof still catching the last rays of the sunken sun. Before him yawned the dark valley, like his grave.

Just then some one came riding up from one side, mounted on a little horse, and Stovmaerke, who had trotted inquisitively up to the stranger, shrank away again with sunken ears and tail, howling and whining, and cowered terror-stricken under his master's charger.

But this noble steed seemed likewise to have forgotten his sometime martial courage. He shuddered, and when the knight would urge him forward in the direction of the stranger, he reared, and snorted, and began to retreat on his hind legs, and it was only with great difficulty and by the exercise of all his rider's strength and skill that he was at length

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subdued, still trembling and white with foam. Sintram drew near to the unknown traveller.

“Timid beasts of yours!” said the stranger, in a soft, muffled voice.

In the ever-deepening twilight Sintram could scarcely discern what kind of a being this was who spoke to him, but out of the enveloping draperies gleamed a dead-white face, so that at first he thought it must be covered with freshly fallen snow. The stranger carried what looked like a small casket wrapped up under his arm; his little horse sank its head down to the ground as though weary to death, and upon the torn unsightly bridle hung a bell which rang mysteriously as it moved.

After a certain silence Sintram answered: “Noble horses may well shrink from those that are less noble, through shame not fear; and the bravest dog feels a secret dread of an unknown face. Mine are no timid beasts.”

“Very good, sir knight. Then ride with me into the valley.”

“I am going to ride into the valley, but I need no companion.”

“But I may perhaps need one. Do you not see that I am unarmed, and that at such an hour the place is haunted by terrible magic creatures.”

At this very moment, as though in dreadful confirmation of the stranger's words, a something swung itself downwards from the nearest frosted tree. Half serpent, half lizard, it twisted and wriggled, threatening to descend upon the knight or his companion. Sintram struck at it with his lance and pierced it through, but it clung fast with the most horrible convulsions to the iron point, and he strove in vain to get rid of it against rock or bough, so he lowered the lance behind him over his right shoulder that at least he might not have the hideous creature in his sight. Then with recovered courage he spoke to the stranger:

"It does, indeed, seem as if I could help you, and an unknown companionship is not absolutely forbidden me. So let us on into the valley."

"Help me!" came the sad responsive echo, "You cannot help me, though I may haply help you. But God have mercy upon you if I could no longer give you help. Then were you lost indeed and I should be sore afraid for you. But come, we will on into the valley in the strength of your word as a knight."

They rode on, Sintram's horse still in a great terror, his faithful dog still cringing and

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whining, but both obedient to their master's will; he himself quiet and steadfast.

The snow had fallen from the steep rocks, and in the light of the rising moon strange distorted faces looked down upon them from the stony walls. Half serpent, half man-like they seemed, yet they were only veins in the rock, or the half-naked roots of trees which by some caprice of nature had there found a footing. Strange and far away the Castle of Drontheim looked once more through a cleft in the rocks as though in farewell.

Then the knight looked hard into his companion's eyes, and he felt all but certain that Weigand the Slender was riding beside him.

"In God's name," he cried, "are you the shade of that departed hero who suffered and died for Verena?"

"I suffered not. I died not," came the answer. "But you suffer, and you die, poor souls! I am not Weigand. I am that other, who seemed so like unto him, and whom you, too, once met in the forest."

At these words a great horror fell upon Sintram, from which he strove hard to break free. He looked at his horse, and would hardly have known him, so changed he was. About his head rustled the withered oak

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leaves like sacrificial flames in the gliding moonlight. His eyes fell upon Stovmaerke, his faithful dog, but him, too, had terror mysteriously transformed. On the ground in the midst of the way lay the bones of the dead; loathsome lizards glided across, and in scorn of the winter season, poisonous flaming toad-stools grew in crowds.

“Can this be my horse I am riding?” murmured the knight to himself. “And this cowering creature who slinks beside me, can it be my dog?”

Then suddenly a strident voice called to him from behind:

“Stay! Stay! Let me go with you, too!”

And looking round, Sintram saw a dreadful little shape, walking upright on horse’s hoofs, with horns on its head, and a face half-pig, half-bear, a ghastly sickle-shaped weapon in its hand. It was the spectre who had haunted him in his terrible dreams, and, alas, it was at the same time the fatal Master Dwarf. Laughing wildly it stretched out a long claw towards the knight.

Sorely troubled, Sintram muttered:

“I have fallen asleep, and now my dreams have broken loose upon me.”

“You are awake,” came the voice of him who rode upon the little horse, “but me, too,

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you have known in your dreams; for behold,  
I am Death!"

And the folded wrappings fell away, and revealed a lean, decaying corpse, the half-dead face crowned with a diadem of serpents, and that which he had carried hidden under his robe was an hour-glass all but run out. This he now lifted and held out towards the knight in his bony right hand. Therewith the bell at the little horse's neck rang most solemnly. It was a passing bell.

"Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," prayed Sintram, and full of earnest resignation he rode towards the beckoning figure of Death.

"Not yet! Not yet! He has not got you yet!" cried the evil fiend from behind him. "Give yourself up to me. In an instant, for my power is swift as your thought, in an instant you shall stand in Normandy. There Helen still blooms, fair as when she sailed away from here, and she shall be yours to-night."

And once more he began his impious praises of Gabriela's beauty, and Sintram's weak heart beat high with wild longing.

Death said not a word, but he lifted up the hour-glass in his right hand, high and ever higher; and as the sand ran out more and more swiftly a soft light from the glass fell



ONCE MORE HE BEGAN HIS IMPIOUS PRAISES OF GABRIELA'S BEAUTY



upon Sintram's face, and he seemed to see Eternity open out before him in peaceful splendour, while with greedy claws the wild disordered World tore at him from behind. He called aloud:

"Wild shape that followest me, in the name of my Saviour, Jesus Christ, I charge you cease from your enticing speeches, and utter that name whereby you are known in the Holy Book!"

A name, more terrible than thunder, fell from the tempter's despairing lips, and he vanished.

"He will come back no more," said Death, kindly.

"So now I am altogether yours, my stern companion?"

"Not yet, my Sintram, not yet for many a long year. But meanwhile do not forget me."

"I will hold you fast in my soul," answered Sintram, "my terrible saviour, my loving warner, my dreadful guide!"

"Ah, but I can look very gentle too."

And so it proved. The form faded softly and still more softly in the growing glimmer which shone from the hour-glass. The face, but now so ghastly and so stern, smiled sweetly. The serpent crown became a glistening palm wreath, the horse a moon-cloud

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of white mist, and the invisible bell rang  
sweet cradle songs from out of the midst  
of it. Sintram seemed to hear these words  
in the sound:

Satan and the world are broken,  
Light eternal fills the place,  
Leads thee onward. For a token,  
Thou shalt help and gently hearken  
Him whose flaming eyes now darken  
At the terrors of my face.

And Sintram, well knowing that the words  
concerned his father, urged his horse to  
stronger speed. He was obeyed now easily  
and gladly, and his faithful dog ran happily  
alongside. Death had vanished, only, just in  
front of him, floated a rosy morning cloud  
which still remained visible even after the  
risen sun shone bright and warm in the clear  
winter heavens.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH

**H**E is dead. He has died of the terror of this awful tempestuous night."

So spoke certain of Biörn's men-at-arms at this very time, when they found that their master had never recovered consciousness since the morning of the day before. They had made ready for him a couch of bears' and wolves' skins in the midst of the fallen armour in the great hall.

"Now God have mercy upon this poor, wild soul," sighed a squire from among them, softly.

Just then the watchman's note sounded from the tower, and a retainer entered the room in great amazement.

"A knight is coming hither," he said, "a marvellous knight. I should have taken him for our Lord Sintram, but a bright morning cloud floats ever in front of him, and illuminates him so radiantly that pure red flowers seem to be falling all about him. Moreover his horse is crowned with a lofty garland of roseate leaves, and this I have never been used to see with our dead lord's son."

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"Just such a crown did I weave for him yesterday," answered another; "and at first he was vexed, but afterwards he suffered it to remain."

"But what made you do that?"

"I seemed to hear a voice in my ear, singing over and over again:

'Fair victory!

Fair victory!

The knight who rides forth to victory.'

"And at that very moment I was standing under a branch of our oldest oak tree which had kept its red and yellow autumn leaves all through the snow. So I did as the song bade me, and stripping some of its foliage wove the gallant charger a conquering crest. Now Stovmaerke was with us, for you know with what a strange fear the good dog always shuns our Lord Biörn, so he had followed the horse to the stable, and when he saw what I had done he seemed to thank me with his joyous caresses. Now these noble creatures understand all about good omens."

The ring of Sintram's spurs could be heard coming up the stone steps, mingled with Stovmaerke's glad barking.

Then all at once the body of old Biörn, whom they had deemed dead, rose up, stared round it on all sides with wide open rolling eyes,

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and spoke in a hollow voice to the terrified attendants.

“Who comes there? Who comes there, my people? I know it is my son. But who comes with him? The answer carries the sword of doom on its lips. See now, dear people, Gott-hard and Rudlieb have prayed hard for me, but if the Master Dwarf is his companion I am lost all the same.”

“You are not lost, dear father,” sounded Sintram’s loving voice through the softly opened door, and a gleam of the red morning cloud floated in with him.

Biörn folded his hands, gazed thankfully heavenwards, and said with a smile:

“God be praised! God be praised! It is the right companion, fair and friendly Death.”

He signed to his son to draw near, saying:

“Come, my saviour, come you who are blessed of the Lord, and I will tell you how it chanced with me.”

Now as Sintram sat down close to his father’s couch a strange thing happened, a contrast and interchange of semblance which startled all who saw it. For old Biörn, once so red and fiery in face and eyes, was now as white and colourless as a stone, while Sintram’s cheeks, of old so deadly pale, shone bright and rosy like a boy’s. This came from the

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reflection of the morning cloud which still hung above him, and whose invisible presence could be felt in the room kindling a tremulous awe in every heart.

“Listen, my son,” the old man began in a soft, loving voice, “I have lain here for many hours in a death sleep, dead and unconscious to all that passed outside me, but within, alas, within I was but too conscious, too much alive. I thought my soul would perish of everlasting terror, and yet I felt one greater fear than this, that my soul might be everlasting as the terror. Dear child, your cheeks, but now red as the morning, begin to whiten at my words. I will say no more, but speak of something less painful. Far, far away, I seemed to be looking into a fair spacious church, and within its walls Gotthard and Rudlieb Lenz were kneeling, and prayed for me. Gotthard was grown very, very old, and looked almost like one of our snow mountains when it is touched with sunset light. And Rudlieb was a man of middle age, but strong and vigorous; and so, vigorously and strongly, for me their enemy, the two called upon God, that he would help. Then I heard a voice like an angel’s, saying: ‘His son is the chief helper. This night he must strive with Death and with the Devil.





THE AGED KNIGHT'S LAST HOUR DREW ON APACE

His victory is victory, his ruin is ruin for his father and for himself.' Thereupon I awoke and knew that my fate was in your hands, and depended upon which companion you would bring with you. You have triumphed. After God, the praise be yours!"

"Gotthard's and Rudlieb's help was great," Sintram answered. "And ah, dear father, the fervent prayers of the chaplain of Drontheim. In my struggle with temptation and terror, I surely felt the heavenly breath of these holy men wafted towards me, bringing help."

"I will gladly believe anything you tell me, my noble son," answered the old man; and at that very moment the chaplain entered. Biörn greeted him with outstretched hands, and a smile of joy and peace.

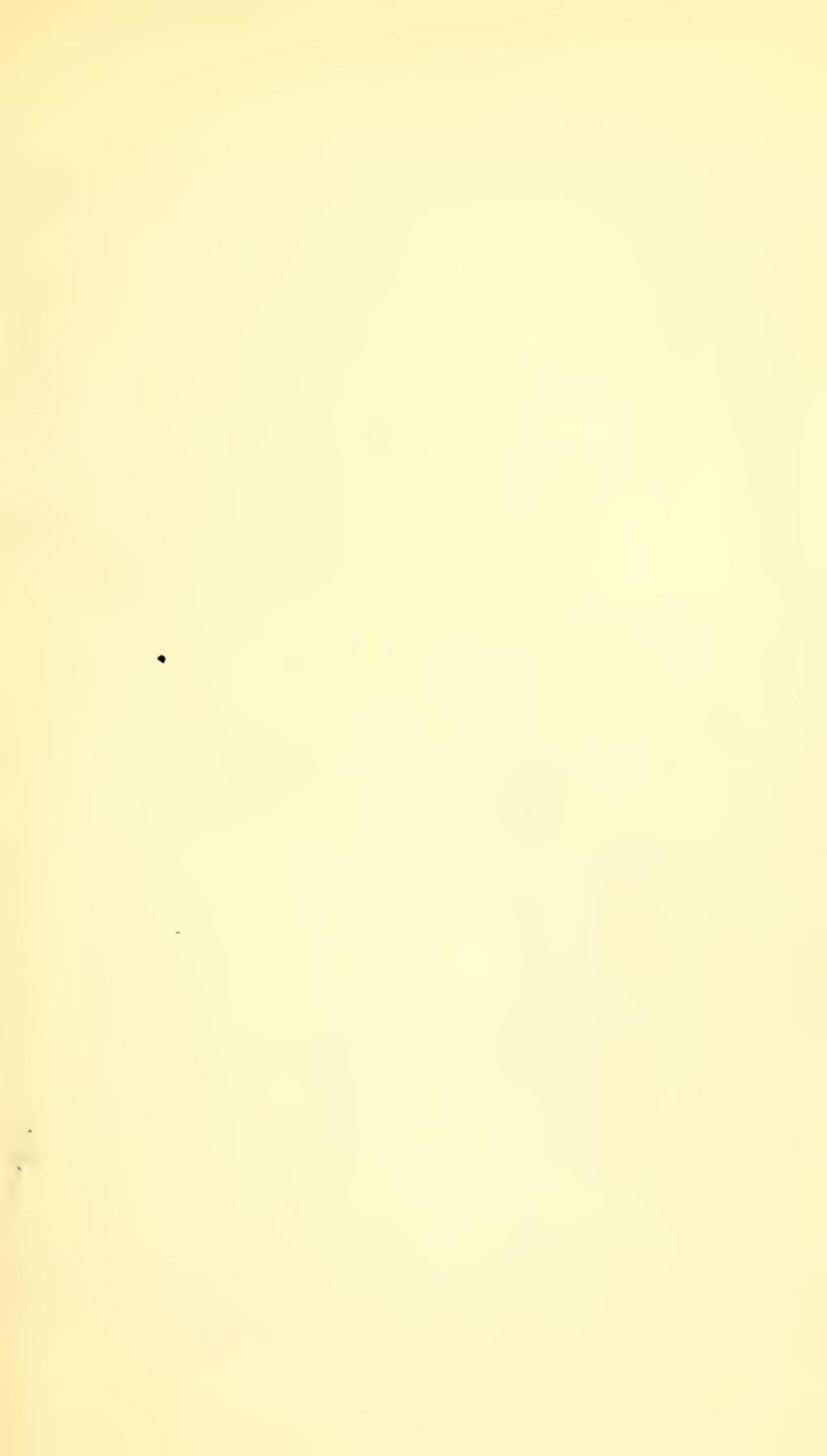
Mutual embraces were exchanged in blessed unity of heart. "See," said old Biörn, "how friendly Stovmaerke has grown towards me, how he jumps upon me with loving caresses. Not long ago he used to howl with terror whenever he saw me."

"Dear sir," said the chaplain, "in these faithful creatures God's spirit likewise dwells, though dimly and as it were in a dream."

It grew more and more peaceful in the hall. The aged knight's last hour drew on

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apace, but he met it calmly and gladly. Sintram and the chaplain prayed by his pillow, and his followers knelt round him in a devout circle. At length the dying man spoke:

"Is not that Verena's prayer-bell at the cloister?" he said, and Sintram understood and nodded an assent, but his heartfelt tears fell upon his father's face, white as death. Then a light shone suddenly in the old eyes, then the morning cloud passed over him and rested there, and light and morning cloud and life faded from the body.





EDWARD S. KELLY 1918

IN SILENCE HE KNELT BEFORE HIS MOTHER

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH

A FEW days later Sintram stood in the convent parlour and awaited his mother's coming with a beating heart. The last time he had seen her was when her fervent farewell kiss had awakened him from his childish slumber, and he had fallen asleep again, dreamily wondering what his mother was going to do. Next morning through castle and garden he had sought for her in vain. Now the chaplain stood beside him and rejoiced with him in his joy. A melancholy rapture flooded Sintram's softened heart, and upon his face there still shone the pale after-glow of that solemn morning cloud.

The inner doors opened, and the Lady Verena entered, tall and majestic in her white veils. A heavenly smile illumined her face, and she signed to her son to approach the grating. Here in this holy place no stormy outbreak of pain or pleasure was possible; the peace which breathed through these halls would have sunk into a heart less proven and purified than Sintram's. In silence he knelt before his mother, and his tears fell fast. The hem

of her robe floated through the bars of the grating, and as Sintram pressed it to his lips, he felt himself caught up into Paradise where every desire and every tumult is stilled.

“Dear mother,” he said, “let me embrace the religious life as you have done. Then I will enter yonder monastery, and perhaps at some future day I may be found worthy to be your confessor, if sickness or the frailty of age should keep the chaplain at Drontheim.”

“That would be a fair and peaceful life, my dear child,” answered Verena. “But another destiny is yours. Courage and valiant knighthood, the protection of the weak, the bridling of the unruly, to these shall you dedicate that long life which is the inheritance of our far northern race, and haply, who knows, to a yet dearer office, full of honour, not fully revealed to me as yet.”

“God’s will be done,” said the knight, and he rose up full of resignation and fortitude.

“That is my good boy,” said his mother. “Many a blossom of joy and peace will be ours. Already our long desire for reunion is satisfied, and now you shall not go altogether away from my sight and knowledge. Every week on this day you must return to

me here, to tell me of your achievements, and receive my counsel and blessing."

"I shall be like a child again, a child who is good and happy," cried Sintram joyfully, "only the good God has thereunto added a man's strength in mind and body. Ah, how blessed is that son who is permitted to rejoice his beloved mother with the flowers and fruits of his life."

So, his heart full of rapture, he departed from the cloister's quiet sphere, and entered upon his life of heroism. In all places where right was to be helped or evil hindered he was found. But this was not all. The hospitable doors of his ancestral castle now stood always open for the shelter and entertainment of strangers; and old Rolf, almost grown young again in his knight's virtue and honour, ruled therein as warden. A winter of Sintram's life passed over him, full of fair deeds, and it was only now and then that he sighed softly to himself, saying:

"Ah, Montfaucon! Ah, Gabriela! I wonder whether you have at last quite forgiven me."

## CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH

SPRING had burst in all its brightness over those northern regions when one morning Sintram rode home to his castle after a successful night attack upon one of the most inveterate disturbers of the country's peace. His soldiers followed him singing. As they drew near the joyous note of a horn came to them from the castle. "It must be some welcome guest," said the knight, and he spurred his horse to a quicker trot over the dew-laden meadow.

Even from that distance old Rolf could be seen busily preparing a breakfast table under the trees in front of the door. From every battlement and tower banners and pennons fluttered merrily in the freshening breeze of spring, and the servants hurried hither and thither all in their festival dress. When the good Rolf caught sight of his master, he clapped his hands joyously above his grey head, and hastened into the castle. Then, just as Sintram reached the threshold, the great doors solemnly opened, and Rolf came towards him. There were tears of joy upon his

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cheeks, and he was followed by three noble forms.

Two tall men, wonderfully alike, one very old, and one but entering the period of old age—these two led a boy between them, a most beautiful boy, clad in a sky-blue velvet page's dress, richly embroidered with golden foliage. The two old men wore the black velvet costume of German burghers, with heavy gold chains and great shining medals on neck and breast.

Sintram had never before set eyes on these noble guests of his, yet now as he looked at them they seemed like long-known and trusted friends. The elder of the two recalled to him his father's dying words about the snow mountain illumined by the light of the evening sun, and at the same time, he knew not why, there crossed his memory a saying of Folko's that in the south one of the highest of these peaks was called the mountain of St Gotthard. So he remembered that his elder guest was called Gotthard, the younger Rudlieb. But the youth in the midst of them—ah, Sintram in his humility hardly dared to let himself hope who this might be, whose features, full of pride and gentleness, called up before him two beloved faces.

Then Gotthard Lenz, king among old men, drew near to him solemnly, and said:

"This is the squire, Engeltram of Montfaucon, the great Baron of Montfaucon's only son. And his father and mother have sent him to you, Lord Sintram, well knowing the holy splendour of your knighthood, that you may train him in the strength and honour of the north, and make him a Christian hero like yourself."

Sintram sprang from his horse. Then Engeltram of Montfaucon held his bridle very prettily, waving back the eager servants gently but firmly, with the words:

"I am the noblest squire of this great knight. I claim his nearest service."

Sintram knelt on the greensward in silent prayer. Then he lifted Folko's and Gabriela's likeness on high towards the morning sun, and cried:

"With God's help, my Engeltram, you shall be like them, and your life like theirs."

But Rolf wept with joy, saying:

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

Gotthard and Rudlieb embraced Sintram, and the Chaplain of Drontheim, who had just entered bearing Verena's morning greet-



"THIS IS THE SQUIRE, ENGELTRAM OF MONTFAUCON"

EDMUND J. SULLIVAN. 1902.



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ing to her valiant son, stretched out his hands  
in blessing over all.

Perhaps at some future day your poet may  
venture to tell of the splendid deeds that  
were accomplished by Engeltram of Mont-  
faucon, both under Sintram's guidance, and  
later by himself alone, in many a quest for  
ladies' honour and the service of God.





*Letchworth: At the Arden Press.*







